Shakespeare's Confines

Patriarchal and Natural Space in *King Lear* and *The Winter's Tale*

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Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract

Tutkielmassani analysoin kahta Shakespearen tunnettua näytelmää tilan ja paikan tutkimuksen näkökulmasta, ja täydennän sitä ekokriittisellä teorialla. Tutkin, kuinka patriarkaaliset hahmot näytelmissä *Kuningas Lear* ja *Talvinen tarina* ovat luoneet omat patriarkaaliset tilansa, jotka ilmenevät sekä fyysisinä että päänsisäisinä muureina, portteina, häkkeinä ja lukkoina. Näiden tilaa rajoittavien elementtien tehtävänä on hallita näytelmien muiden hahmojen tiloja esimerkiksi vangitsemalla tai karkoittamalla nämä pois patriarkaalisesta tilasta. Nämä karkoitetut hahmot hakevat usein suojapaikkaa luonnosta kaukana sortavista muureista, ja löytävät sieltä uuden, luonnollisemman tavan elää ilman tilallisia rajoitteita. *Kuningas Learin* tragediassa nämä kaksi tilaa, patriarkaalinen ja luonnollinen, eivät koskaan kohtaa, mutta *Talvisen tarinan* romanssissa ne yhdistyvät näytelmän lopussa, kun patriarkka suostuu ottamaan vastaan vaikutteita muuriensa ulkopuolelta.

Teoriani pohjana on humanististen tieteiden tilallinen käänne, jonka myötä kirjallisuudentutkijat ovat kiinnittäneet enemmän huomiota tilojen ja paikkojen ilmentymiin teksteissä. Perustan tutkimukseni ranskalaisen filosofin Henri Lefebvren ajatukseen siitä, kuinka tilat ovat sosiaalisesti luotuja, eivätkä ole vain ns. tyhjiä säiliöitä. Ihmiset luovat tiloja, ja täten perustelen käyttämäni termin *patriarchal space*, joka on voimasuhteeseen perustuva tila. Myös Lefebvre asettaa vastakkain sosiaalisen ja luonnollisen tilan (*natural space*), ja tämä kahtiajako vastaa karkeasti omaa jaotteluani. Täydennän luonnollisen tilan tutkimusta ekokriittisellä ja ekofeministisellä teorialla, ja tutkin esimerkiksi kuinka patriarkkojen ajatusmallit heijastavat äärimmäistä luonnonpelkoa, jota Simon C. Estok kutsuu ekofobiaksi.

Tilantutkimus ja ekokritiikki yhdistyivät ensi kertaa vuonna 2016 julkaistussa artikkelikokoelmassa, ja samana vuonna julkaistiin myös ensimmäinen Shakespearea ja tilantutkimusta käsittelevä artikkelikokoelma. Tutkielmani kuuluu ensimmäisiin nämä kolme aihepiiriä yhdistäviin tutkimuksiin, ja se toivottavasti avaa keskustelua tämän yhdistelmän mahdollisuuksista. Tuloksistani päätellen väittäisin, että diskurssi voimankäytön ja luonnon suhteista on ajankohtaista ja tärkeää huolimatta siitä, että lähdeteksteinä on renessanssiajan draamaa. Shakespearen patriarkkojen ajatusmallit heijastavat nykyelämässämme ilmeneviä suhtautumistapoja voimankäyttöön ja luontoon. Välinpitämättömyys ilmastonmuutoksesta on yksi esimerkki ihmisen luomasta sosiaalisesta muurista, jolla hän pitää luonnon loitollaan, niin kuin Shakespearen äärimmäiset tapaukset osoittavat.

Avainsanat – Nyckelord – Keywords

Shakespeare, Kuningas Lear, Talvinen tarina, renessanssidraama, tilan ja paikan tutkimus, ekokritiikki, ekofeminismi, Henri Lefebvre

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1 Introduction

> Before examining the play in closer detail, it is necessary to ask the question: is it important to know where the action is taking place in a Shakespearean play?
>
> (Jones 64)

Gwilym Jones begins his environmental analysis of *King Lear* by asking whether spatial cues matter in Shakespeare. My answer to the question is an absolute yes. Jones is mainly concerned with cues about physical places in Shakespeare's drama, such as the balcony in *Romeo and Juliet* or the heath in *King Lear*, while the purpose of the present thesis is to examine space as a somewhat more abstract concept, although I will also consider physical manifestations.

In this thesis, I am surveying the extent to which two of Shakespeare's well-known plays, *King Lear* and *The Winter's Tale*, exhibit what I categorize as patriarchal and natural spaces. Roughly speaking, the former refers to the abstract and physical spaces of male rulers – King Lear and Leontes, respectively – and the interiors of their courts, while the latter denotes the outdoors, the nonhuman space of nature. The interplay between these two contrasting spaces, it turns out, is an intriguing subject of study, not without implications for modern life.

When studying representations of male domination in these two plays, we can see that Shakespeare portrays patriarchs who have lost their connection to nature, much to the detriment of all those in their vicinity. Both Lear and Leontes reign, and rage, within the walls of their courts and kingdoms, thus forming social spaces that no longer resemble the world outside with its natural course of events. Their patriarchal spaces are all man-made, distant from the natural space outside.

Both plays, however, exhibit also the counterpoint to the patriarchal realm, characters who showcase a more reciprocal relationship with nature: in *King Lear*, Edgar and Cordelia, and in *The Winter's Tale*, Perdita and Autolycus. These characters, more aligned with natural space because they have all been banished there from patriarchal space, serve to subvert the

delusions of the courts. The former play is a tragedy, and the help, provided by the younger generation of characters more oriented toward the natural space, comes too late, yet the latter play, being a late romance, showcases a rare moment when these two clashing spaces, patriarchal and natural, are reconciled at the end.

I firmly believe that examining the possible dangers of male-dominated spaces in Shakespeare, no matter how old or fictional the texts, provides a useful analogy to our own times. Domestic violence, high male incarceration rates, workplace harassment, and the #MeToo campaign all deal with age-old societal issues, and I would argue that the link between Shakespeare's kings and these current phenomena is not as tenuous as it might seem. Similar patterns of exercising power over either women or nature appear even in Shakespeare's plays. Therefore, rather than focusing on historicism as such, I mainly approach the two plays with what has been called a presentist approach in early modern ecocriticism. While historicists are more interested in "examin[ing] the specifics of historical moments in which they exist," the presentist approach emphasizes the ways that environmental questions regarding old texts "must inform our response to environmental concerns now" (Munroe, "Shakespeare and Ecocriticism Reconsidered" 463). In fact, I would argue that much of the allure of Shakespeare's plays owes to their applicability in the modern age, not only as entertaining drama but as societally thought-provoking discourse.

I begin by surveying the theoretical and critical basis of my thesis, first by defining in more detail the concept of space which I use on the basis of Henri Lefebvre, the French philosopher who argued that space is a social product. I then briefly look at what previous scholars have stated regarding spatial Shakespeare as well as ecocritical Shakespeare studies, two areas which, I would argue, are interrelated fields. In my analytical chapters, I focus on the ways that the kings manifest their patriarchal spaces via physical and abstract (metaphorical) walls of containment. Cages, ports, gates, and latches are among some of the recurring elements in both plays that are used to control the spaces of others. Often this control entails banishment, exclusion from the patriarchal locus, which leads the banished to encounter the natural environment far beyond the oppressive barriers. In the open, where socially

construed spaces do not exist, characters learn to co-operate with nature in varying degrees. However, before perusing the plays in any more detail, it is necessary to survey the basic theoretical and critical tenets behind my argumentation.

2 Theoretical and Critical Background

Within this limited space, it is impossible to do justice to the ever-growing body of spatial literary theory and imbue it with ecocriticism, let alone sufficiently cover the immense field of Shakespearean criticism. Keeping this inevitable limitation in mind, I focus here mainly on previous scholars who have read Shakespeare through a spatial and ecocritical lens.

2.1 The Concept of Space

Before I proceed further, a few words need to be said about the concept of space, especially in a literary context. In this subchapter, I outline what I mean by patriarchal and natural space, and how they are linked to a literary analysis of Shakespeare.

Although patriarchal space as a definite term has not, to my knowledge, been comprehensively examined before, patriarchy is an obvious subject of study in several feminist studies of early modern England. As Susan Dwyer Amussen has shown, the head of the household was the father or the male, and there existed an analogy between the patriarch and God, the male sometimes figuring as a representative of a divine order (37). Moreover, at the time, there was also an analogy between the household and the state, as Amussen argues by quoting, among others, Richard Brathwait's book *The English Gentleman*, published in 1630: "As every man's house is his Castle, so is his family a private Commonwealth, where if due government be not observed, nothing but confusion is to be expected" (155, quoted in Amussen 37). Therefore, royal households were not, of course, the only spaces maintaining patriarchy, but there, as Shakespeare's plays demonstrate, patriarchal rule (and the subverting of it) is most evident.[1] The spatial metaphor of "his Castle" in Brathwait's book is suggestive of the uneven

[1] As Catherine Belsey argues regarding dethroned kings, "the loss of political place finally entails the dissolution of the self" (40), visible, for instance, in the demented Lear, who is exposed to natural space. Belsey's claim foregrounds the utmost spatialization of power that is evident in *King Lear* and *The Winter's Tale*, that is, the way that both kings identify themselves with the space (their "Castles," to follow Brathwait's analogy) that they rule.

relationship between husband and wife, since it gives him a prestigious status as well as validates him as the owner of the domestic space (which, essentially, makes it a patriarchal space).

In contrast to the elevated male, women were often conceived as property in the household, as Peter Stallybrass notes (127). Stallybrass states also how, from an economic perspective, the woman "is the fenced-in enclosure of the landlord, her father, or husband" (127). However, patriarchal rule did not entail complete restriction of the female in early modern England. Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford make the case that women "created their own culture, in part, by demarcating and controlling their own space" and that "the household was a female-dominated milieu" (205). I agree with the first statement, and would argue that Perdita in *The Winter's Tale* and Cordelia in *King Lear* set their own abstract boundaries to defy patriarchal control. The second statement of the household as dominated by women might be true to the extent that household chores were handled by women, yet it misses the overarching, even if abstract, patriarchal rule. Mendelson and Crawford go on to show contemporary records of domestic violence, and how, as several vivid church court cases reveal, husbands might have locked their wives out of their houses in the middle of winter (211). Similarly, in the 1615 translation of Benedetto Varchi's *The Blazon of Jealousie* by R. Toste, the translator marks how jealous men "have cast off their Wives, and Mistresses, onely upon a meere suspicion" (19, quoted in Stallybrass 128). These documented cases are not far away from the spatial control exercised by the kings in *King Lear* and *The Winter's Tale*, as we will see.

One of the theoretical aims of the present thesis is to bring ecocritical discourse to spatial analysis. I do not claim that environmental issues have not been discussed in spatiality studies before, but they are often a peripheral topic, appearing in the margins of works that focus on urban spaces. Dana Phillips call this "urbocentrism," definable as the "consistent privileging of built environments in spatial theory precisely because they bear such clear and undeniable traces of spatial production" (Radović 139), calling to mind, for instance, Edward Soja's *Thirdspace*, an influential explication of the urban landscape. Similarly, Michel de Certeau's important contribution to the study of space, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, is essentially a reading of cityscape.

Therefore, I here call attention to the ways that many of the spatial theorists and critics have, in fact, discussed natural space.

Among the most important theorists of space is the French philosopher Henri Lefebvre, whose 1974 book *Production de l´espace* (*The Production of Space*) lays most of the groundwork for my analysis of Shakespeare's patriarchal and natural space. Lefebvre's main contribution to the field is his argument that space is a social product, not an empty container. "Every society … produces a space, its own space," he notes, and continues with an example of a Greek city: "The city of the ancient world cannot be understood as a collection of people and things in space; nor can it be visualized solely on the basis of a number of texts and treatises on the subject of space" (31). Perceiving space as socially charged and malleable by humans leads to my argument for patriarchal space. Power relations are an inherent part of any human-controlled space. Therefore, I would argue for the existence of patriarchal space, by which I refer to a male-ruled physical and/or abstract space where a patriarch controls the physical and/or abstract space of others. In the case of Shakespeare, this manifests in kings such as King Lear and Leontes, the king of Sicilia, and in interior spaces, the courts that they rule. I will elaborate on this in my chapters on *King Lear* and *The Winter's Tale* in order to show what patriarchal space specifically entails.

While Lefebvre does not discuss patriarchal spaces *per se*, he delves into natural space in detail.[2] It is an often-neglected feature in *The Production of Space*, a book that is often summarized as a Marxist, anti-capitalist analysis of social spaces. However, before capitalist or social spaces existed, Lefebvre argues, there was, and still is in the background, natural space. His take on the ever-disappearing natural environment is surprisingly aware of an environmental perspective:

> Natural space is disappearing. Granted: natural space was – and it remains – the common point of departure: the origin, and the

[2] However, Lefebvre does examine the inherent *hegemony* of one class over others, which manifests itself in social spaces (10). His theory is largely rooted in Marxism, which explains his focus on social classes, yet its aspect of power relations is applicable to my more feminist leaning and to the notion of patriarchal space.

> original model, of the social process – perhaps even the basis of all 'originality'. Granted, too, that natural space has not vanished purely and simply from the scene. It is still the background of the picture; as décor, and more than décor, it persists everywhere, and every natural detail, every natural object is valued even more as it takes on symbolic weight (the most insignificant animal, trees, grass, and so on).
>
> (30)

Not only does Lefebvre touch upon urbanization and the resulting loss of natural space but also mentions the symbolic weight of natural objects: how they became romanticized, distant, and lost. As humanity gradually loses its connection to nature, we cannot see clearly anymore what it truly is, but have our own conceptions about it and, often, idealize it. In terms of Shakespeare's kings who have already distanced themselves from natural space, this entails the emergence of delusional ideas about nature and, in extreme cases, what Simon C. Estok calls "ecophobia," an irrational fear of the natural world (*Ecocriticism and Shakespeare* 4).

Another significant contributor to the study of space, especially in terms of literature, is Gaston Bachelard, whose book *La Poétique de l´espace* (*The Poetics of Space*) was published in 1958. For me, his study of space is important for two reasons. Bachelard examines the interior spaces of home, room by room, and illuminates his exploration with passages from literature. By doing so, he brings to attention the interrelatedness of physical spaces (the homes we live in) and their representations in art. Even more importantly, from an ecocritical perspective, Bachelard implies a connection between the rooms of a home and the habitats of the natural world. As Lefebvre notes of Bachelard, "drawers, chests, and cabinets are not far removed from their natural analogues, … namely the basic figures of nest, shell, corner, roundness, and so on. In the background, so to speak, stands Nature" (121).

The work of Bachelard, Lefebvre, and de Certeau laid ground for what has been called "a spatial turn" in literary and cultural studies, emerging somewhere at the onset of postmodernism and post-structuralism (Tally 3). This meant a general shift from a focus on time to an emphasis on space in studies of literature and culture. Putting behind classical narratology, my

approach is post-structuralist in the sense that I do not discuss, for example, how an author evokes the sense of a certain place in one's writing, but attempt to show the social and ecocritical implications of space as they are implied by the text.

In their introduction to *Shakespeare and Space: Theatrical Explorations of the Spatial Paradigm* (2016), Ina Habermann and Michelle Witen claim that there are seven different types of spaces in Shakespeare. The categories range from actual stage space to early modern geographies, the fourth category fittingly describing my study of "social/gendered space" (3). However, although the introduction categorizes this space aptly, the first set of articles in the book do not address questions regarding societal matters, let alone environmental issues. The second half of the book focuses solely on different productions of *Hamlet* around the world, and this section includes some social critique. Yet, overall, the book is curiously devoid of topics such as societal or gendered spaces in Shakespeare. With this thesis, I am hoping to offer at least a minor contribution to the incipient field of socio-spatial Shakespeare.

What is more, it was not until 2016 that the first book explicitly combining ecocritical and spatial literary analysis, *Ecocriticism and Geocriticism: Overlapping Territories in Environmental and Spatial Literary Studies*, edited by Robert T. Tally Jr. and Christine M. Battista, was published. Before 2016, however, the two areas of study have operated rather separately, which means that there is more work to be done in order to narrow the gap between two such interrelated fields. Besides my wish to contribute to the study of socio-spatial Shakespeare, I also hope to contribute to the field of eco-spatial literary studies. This tripartite plan to discuss space, ecocriticism, and Shakespeare within a single thesis might sound overly ambitious, but hopefully the sum of its parts manages to bring some fresh ideas to the table.

Finally, to clarify the terminology I use in this thesis, I prefer "patriarchal" and "natural" space over, for example, "the space of patriarchy" or "the space of nature." The latter choices seem reductive, essentializing heterogeneous spaces that in truth comprise multitudes of elements. By preferring "patriarchal" and "natural," I aim to draw attention to one of their main features, not to say that a court exhibits nothing but patriarchy, or a

forest manifests nothing but pure nature. (What would be pure nature, for that matter?)

2.2 Ecocritical and Spatial Criticism of *King Lear* and *The Winter's Tale*

As mentioned above, I limit my discussion of Shakespearean criticism to a specific field of study, that of ecocriticism, and even with ecocriticism I focus on critics and scholars who have touched upon spatial topics in their work. I begin with *King Lear* and then move on to *The Winter's Tale*.

King Lear has been an obvious object of study for many ecocritics. The play is incredibly wealthy in its number of references to the natural world, scrupulously explicated by, for example, Caroline F. E. Spurgeon in her 1935 book *Shakespeare's Imagery and What it Tells Us*. Although by no means an ecocritic, Spurgeon laid the ground for later ecofeminist criticism by noting, for instance, how Lear talks of his daughters with animalistic and predatory imagery (341).

A few decades later, John McCloskey elaborated how the derogatory natural imagery progresses and regresses through the course of the play from metaphors of animals to those of insects, depending on whom Lear is talking to (321). By arguing that Lear fails to read human nature (321), McCloskey's 1962 article is evidently proto-ecological: his argument is essentially anthropocentric in its argument that Lear's fault occurs only in human relations and not in his relation to actual natural space. By bringing McCloskey's argument to contemporary ecocriticism, I would update it by stating that Lear fails to read nature, not only human nature, and this contributes to his fall.

More explicitly ecocritical thought pertaining to *King Lear* appeared in the beginning of the 2000s. Steve Mentz has importantly questioned simple dualistic notions between nature and human by stressing what he calls post-equilibrium ecological models, which "de-centre humanity's place in nature and emphasize complexity and variability in all natural systems" ("Weather" 140). "Plays like *King Lear*," goes on,

> can help transform sterile dualisms and static eco-systems into pluralized and dynamic conceptions of self and nature. Making

> sense of these competing frames requires shifting from a pastoral vision, in which nature resembles a pasture or garden, to a meteorological one, in which nature changes constantly and challenges the body at its boundaries.
>
> ("Weather" 140)

Mentz's argument is specifically relevant in light of the present thesis, in which I study delusional ideas of the natural world: a natural space that only resembles a pasture or garden (both being products of human interference) is a faulty vision.

Another faulty vision of natural space as regards *King Lear* is the myth of the heath. Gwilym Jones has gone into detail in debunking the view that most of the action of the play occurs on a heath. In fact, he argues, there are surprisingly few spatial cues in the play that would imply any specific location (66). The insistence on claiming that *King Lear* occurs on a heath is probably rooted in Nicholas Rowe's 1709 edition of the play, or Nahum Tate's Restoration re-imagining of the play dating back to 1681 (67). "I have shown," Jones says, "that location informs meaning in some plays, but *Lear* is characterized by a lack of location which is part of its disorientating aesthetic" (67). While I agree with Jones to some extent (part of the play's attraction is its universalness), I do not think the play is characterized by "a lack of location" *per se*. The location might not be specific, but as readers or viewers we certainly know when the action is taking place inside or outside, in court or in nature. These distinctions in space are more important than knowing exactly whether the action takes place on a heath or not. It is nonetheless the natural space where Lear faces the storm, and this fact alone opens up many questions, making further perusal of the heath seem redundant.

Andreas Mahler's recent article on spatiality and *King Lear* deals in part with the natural world, yet I would question his main notion that nature is an "enclave." Mahler regards nature as an enclave, as an enclosed space of retreat, while I believe it to be the other way around in the grand scheme of things: nature simply *cannot* be an enclosed space. Moreover, "enclave" suggests something man-made, which nature in its purest form is not.

Therefore, what is more reminiscent of an enclave is, for example, the fantasies of patriarchal confinement imposed by Lear and Leontes.

Let me now turn to the (eco)critical background of *The Winter's Tale*. Many critics of the play have noted the evident dichotomy of spaces in it, contrasting Sicilia's wintery and confining court with the lush and open nature of Bohemia. This clear-cut dichotomy of spaces is something I contest in my analysis of the play in chapter 4, noting how patriarchal structures similar to those in Sicilia manifest themselves in the seemingly remedial and natural space of Bohemia. I have not come across similar findings regarding the play, although Simon C. Estok has importantly noted the lack of such analyses. He emphasizes the significance of space in *The Winter's Tale*, but: "Nowhere … do we find discussions about the spatial dimension of the play's patriarchy, of how the different geographies work in maintaining certain kinds of social relations, or of how the natural environment works in all of this" (*Ecocriticism and Shakespeare* 95–96). It is with this notion in mind that my thesis proceeds to study the play's spatial dimension of patriarchy in terms of ecocriticism.

Like Estok, Gabriel Egan has noted the gendered characteristics of different spaces in the play. Although the coverage of Shakespeare's late romances seems otherwise rather rushed in his *Green Shakespeare*, Egan drives home many crucial points about the role of space in *The Winter's Tale*. For instance, he notes how the climate affects the characters inhabiting different spaces of the play and how in many of the play's metaphors the countries – Sicilia and Bohemia – are associated with maleness, whilst the ground underfoot, the actual earth, is associated with femaleness. In other words, he dismisses the simple division into two places, and argues for a more heterogeneous amalgamation of spaces, where the abstract concept of country is often associated with males, and a crucial element of the natural space (ground) is often linked with females.

As I will show in chapter 4, it is indeed erroneous to make simplified divisions into interior and exterior, or a cold country and a warm country. In this aspect, Rebecca Laroche and Jennifer Munroe have done an important job in blurring such dichotomies in their study *Shakespeare and Ecofeminist Theory*. Laroche and Munroe challenge the idea of binaries related to domestic life, such as inside/outside and human/nonhuman, arguing that the

containment that a household stands for is illusory. The domestic space is much more multifaceted, and Laroche and Munroe show, for example, how 'lesser creatures' such as spiders and moths expose literal holes in households as well as the whole delusion of containment. I would argue that it is this delusion which affects both Lear and Leontes as they rule within the illusory safety of their walls.

Moreover, specifically in terms of *The Winter's Tale*, Laroche and Munroe link the statue of Hermione, an idealized female, to the Petrarchan sonnet tradition, and note how it is no coincidence that an inert stone is given a female subjectivity, a stone that is silent and does not complain. This detail is crucial in the analysis of the play's ending by making it more ambiguous whether Leontes has changed at the end.

The ending of the play has, indeed, interested many critics, and Munroe has elsewhere argued that the ending is somewhat hopeful. Munroe connects the tree imagery in the beginning of the play – that of Leontes and Polixenes as a severed branch – with the play's resolution, when Perdita and Florizel arrive at the court in Sicilia, and Leontes is reunited with Hermione. By that moment, Munroe argues, Leontes has reoriented toward the natural world and women. She emphasizes that the women of the play are better informed of the natural world and know how to make use of what nature creates instead of imposing dominion over it, as the men in the play do.

Charlotte Scott is another critic who has viewed the ending as victorious for nature and women. She is also among the few critics who have discussed Autolycus, a character whom I will also study in chapter 4. Scott problematizes the pastoral idyll of Bohemia by alluding to prevalent consumerism in the subplot involving Autolycus, and by pointing out that Perdita is ultimately the only character in the fourth act, who denounces human intervention in the natural world. At the play's finale, Scott argues, it is nature and the women who win, as they are the sole believers in nature, the real thing, as 'art itself is nature.' However, as I will argue in chapter 4, the ending is more ambiguous than Scott makes it sound, if we pay attention to the spatial details of Act Five. Interestingly, and rare for Shakespeare, the final scene of *The Winter's Tale* occurs within a female space, the house of Paulina, and this problematizes the ending, much to Shakespeare's merit: when

Leontes, led by Paulina, leaves the female space, the play ends and we do not learn how Leontes acts as he re-enters his patriarchal domain.

These are many, although not all, of the aspects of ecocritically imbued spatiality that I aim to expand upon in the upcoming chapters. It is my hope that, by paying more attention to spatial details in the two plays, we may not only learn more about ecocritical Shakespeare as an academic field of study but also, with the presentist mindset, re-examine the social and natural spaces we live in.

3 Cages and Ports: *King Lear*

King Lear's critical tradition goes back hundreds of years, and, as noted above in 2.2, the play's nature imagery has been studied exhaustively. My attempt here is not to repeat what previous scholars have stated in regards to nature imagery but to focus on the ways that the two main spaces, patriarchal space and natural space, function in the play. While nature is predominant in *King Lear*, it is here examined against its contrasting element, patriarchal space, which manifests not only as King Lear's kingdom but also in metaphors of cages, barriers, ports, and other confining and containing structures, which serve to both banish and exclude nature from indoor spaces. In the first section, I scrutinize the dimensions of patriarchy in the play and how it is manifested in spatial terms, paying attention to both physical and metaphorical indicators of confinement and containment. Then, I survey how the oppressing and limiting structures are subverted in natural space, specifically, how Edgar and Cordelia utilize nature and thus come to defy the barriers set by the older generation of male rulers.

3.1 Patriarchal Space

In addition to being a play about nature, *King Lear* is also a play about space. Estok recalls space as the subject of the most asked questions about the play in his classroom – "what's going on with the play's obsession with space?" ("Home" 24) – and unsurprisingly so. The play opens with Lear's division of the kingdom where a physical map is present onstage, proceeds to show the king moving from the safe indoors to the dangerous outdoors (from which he refuses to move back inside anymore), and ends in his dream of a cage that he would share with his daughter. The subplot, mirroring the main events, shows Gloucester's hunt for one his sons by barring all the ports lest he should escape, yet the son utilizes spatial means to overcome the danger. Both plots manifest an older man's wish for spatial control, and, if we agree that controlling space entails power, both plots deal with what I call patriarchal space: a physical and/or abstract space of male rule that aims to control others' physical and/or abstract space. My analysis begins with the titular character: I first examine

Lear's spatially and ecophobically oriented mindset, from which it is fitting to turn attention to his actual struggle outdoors at nature's mercy. I end this subchapter with a discussion of Gloucester and how he not only persecutes Edgar but also spatially distances himself from his other son, Edmund.

Before he moves to the natural environment in the third act, Lear presides within interior spaces and is surprisingly keen to uphold his status as a ruler, although he dethrones himself in the play's first scene. For instance, he uses the royal plural extensively in the ceremonial beginning – "Which of you shall *we* say doth love *us* most" (1.1.51, emphases added) – and commands his daughters to impress him. The royal "we" and the ceremonial language used here suggests that Lear is in no hurry to be dethroned or, at least, that he does not realize that what he is giving up is "spatial worth," as Estok calls it ("Home" 24).

Not unlike Leontes in *The Winter's Tale* (as discussed in 4.1), Lear has no noticeable connection to real nature and this, in part, reinforces his indoors-oriented, closed mind. His detachment from nature is visible in the language he uses to depict the kingdom's environment: "Of all these bounds," he says to Regan,

> even from this line to this,
> With shadowy forests and with champaigns riched,
> With plenteous rivers and wide-skirted meads,
> We make thee lady.
>
> (1.1.63–66)

Besides the "shadowy forests," each example of nature in Lear's speech is of cultivated nature, of nature that is there for human purposes: "champaigns" and "meads" suggest cultivated land and "plenteous rivers" implies abundant fish. In total, this image of nature is much different from the nature he encounters later in the play. He does not expect such harsh reality where the harvesting of food is a much more laborious effort than he makes it seem in his speech.

The dark forests in his speech, however, showcase another aspect of his relation to nature. While it must be acknowledged that Lear uses "shadowy" in a positive sense here, it also carries a vague sense of the sublime, something that is awe-inspiring in a fearful way. Besides maintaining romanticized beliefs

of his kingdom's environment in this way (at least outwardly during the ceremony), he is at the same time afraid of nature. His condescending view of natural phenomena is apparent in the various derogatory metaphors he applies to other human beings, most often to his daughters. He is especially vehement about connecting the female body with natural imagery in the most slighting manner possible. This vocabulary has been studied elsewhere extensively, so a few examples should suffice: "Down from the waist they are centaurs," he says of women, "though women all above" (4.6.121–122).[3] In this vein, he proceeds to describe the vagina: "beneath is all the fiend's: there's hell, there's darkness, there is the sulphurous pit, burning, scalding, stench, consumption!" (4.6.123–125). As well as being detached from and unaware of the outdoors, he is insensitive in his relations with women, and Lear's wife is notably non-existent in the play. Just as the "darkness" of the "sulphurous" female genitalia, the "shadowy forests" are the unknown, the source of the incomprehensible, the heart of his ecophobia. He lacks understanding of the other, be it nature or women, and this, in turn, may also explain Lear's somewhat incestuous tendencies toward his daughters.[4]

Safe in the confines of his kingdom, afraid of the outside, Lear utilizes metaphors of gates that guard his mind from outside influences. As the following passage shows, however, the gates fail to keep them out:

> O most small fault,
> How ugly didst thou in Cordelia show,
> Which like an engine wrenched my frame of nature
> From the fixed place, drew from my heart all love
> And added to the gall. O Lear, Lear, Lear!

---

[3] For example, McCloskey has scrupulously analyzed the development of animal imagery over the course of the play, whereas Shannon has explicated the derogatory use of animal imagery in terms of what she calls "human negative exceptionalism."

[4] Foakes, for one, has argued that "after casting Cordelia off, Lear's remark, 'I loved her most' (1.1.124), seems at first even more outrageous than his action, but also makes explicable the extremity of his behaviour, in so far as she was for the old man both a fantasy object of sexual desire and a substitute mother" (60). Foakes bases his argument on Coppélia Kahn's influential article "The Absent Mother in *King Lear*," in which she argues for Lear's incestuous tendencies from a psychoanalytic viewpoint.

> [*striking his head*] Beat at this gate that let thy folly in
> And thy dear judgment out.
>
> (1.4.258–264)

Just as Leontes' metaphorical gates in *The Winter's Tale* cannot keep things in and out according to the patriarch's wishes (see 4.1), Lear here harbors delusions of containment. It is one of the first times in the play that Lear acknowledges that he has made a wrong decision, yet he lays the blame on some outside force that has penetrated his gate (his mind), as if something that is not inherently *him* has caused the turmoil. Similarly, he claims that it is the gate's (not *his*) fault that he lacks a sense of judgment. Besides this use of a spatial metaphor in depicting his state of mind, the speech is also significant in one other spatial aspect: Lear imagines an "engine" wrenching out his natural affection for Cordelia from "the fixed place." Evidently, Lear is afraid of spatial change and is angry because something has moved from its fixed location. This is another foreshadowing of Lear's movement from a fixed, safe place (his court) to the threatening natural environment.

Cordelia (discussed in 3.2) is indeed Lear's first encounter in the play with something more natural. Here, the "natural" means Cordelia's natural, filial love for a father rather than a king. As soon as Cordelia disrupts the ceremony with her refusal to flatter him, Lear drops the use of the royal plural – "Here *I* disclaim all my paternal care [of Cordelia]" (1.1.114, emphasis added) – and thus his patriarchal delusions are questioned for the first time: the "fixed place" of the patriarch is shaken. Cordelia, to use Lear's phrase directed to Goneril later in the play, "shakes [his] manhood thus" (1.4.289).

Lear's preconceptions about women and nature are interrelated, as we have seen in terms of fear and darkness. Lear misreads Cordelia and, as McCloskey has argued, the tragedy of the play resides in the king's "misreading of human nature" (321). However, I would extend his argument of Lear's misreading to include nature itself (not merely *human* nature), and, specifically, nature as a space that Lear has lost his connection to. The reason Lear misreads Cordelia (and thus human nature) is because both the natural world and women are illegible to him. Looking at Lear's problem from this angle, the focus shifts from an anthropocentric to an ecocentric perspective, which is something that McCloskey's argument lacks. Focusing solely on the

human subjects, as if nature plays no role in the play or is at best a backdrop for the human tragedy, misses a possible explanation for *why* Lear misreads his daughter.

As the above paragraph implies, "nature" has several definitions in the play. It is used with different meanings by different characters. There is no consensus, and this, in part, correlates with many of the play's misfortunes: Lear himself evokes natural powers and lives as if synchronized with nature, yet his idea of nature differs radically from that of Cordelia, for example, and thus are ready to clash. Lear's "frame of nature" that is wrenched by the "engine" (see the quote above) refers only to his patriarchal mindset, while nature seems to mean something completely different for Cordelia.

Therefore, in his patriarchal delusions, Lear believes he is in control of nature. He often conjures elements of nature as weapons – "by the sacred radiance of the sun, / The mysteries of Hecate and the night, / By all the operations of the orbs" (1.1.110–112) – or considers himself a powerful beast: "Come not between the dragon and his wrath!" (1.1.123). As the examples demonstrate, his idea of nature also has a mythological dimension. It is far from the notion of nature that Edgar has under the guise of Poor Tom (see 3.2) or Perdita has regarding her garden in *The Winter's Tale* (see 4.2), both characters utilizing nature for practical and physical purposes.

Overall, Lear's patriarchal mindset is his safe space where he reigns without being influenced by outside elements. When banishing Kent (another character questioning the king's decisions and hence cast out), Lear sums up his ideology fittingly, repeating several of the patriarchal features I have discussed above:

> That thou hast sought to make *us* break *our* vows,
> Which *we* durst never yet, and with strained pride
> To come betwixt *our* sentences and *our* power,
> Which nor *our nature*, nor *our place* can bear,
> *Our* potency made good, take thy reward.
> Five days *we* do allot thee for provision,
> To *shield thee from disasters of the world*,
> And on the sixth to turn thy hated back
> Upon *our* kingdom.

(1.1.169–177, emphases added)

Here, Lear is desperately holding on to his fragile masculinity, not only repeating the royal plural ten times, but also feeling that his "nature" and "place" are threatened by Kent's attempt to influence him. Moreover, the lines are cumbersome and reflect Lear's endeavor to seem more powerful by numbers. Crowning his speech with the idea that his kingdom can "shield [Kent] from disasters of the world," Lear again reveals his fear of the outside world which, according to him, is full of disasters.

Much to his dismay, Lear himself loses this shield when he ventures into the outside world. I now turn to examine how Lear copes with his mindset in nature when he is no longer surrounded by physical nor abstract walls of containment. It is in this natural space that Lear resides for the rest of the play.

Lear's emergence into nature occurs in the much-discussed storm scene, analyzed exhaustively by many scholars. Due to the limitations of space, I do not mean to provide an all-encompassing reading of the scene, but I want to turn attention to Lear's delusion of agency in this passage:

> Blow winds and crack your cheeks! Rage, blow!
> You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout
> Till you have drenched our steeples, drowned the cocks!
> You sulphurous and thought-executing fires,
> Vaunt-couriers of oak-cleaving thunderbolts,
> Singe my white head! And thou, all-shaking thunder,
> Strike flat the thick rotundity o'the world,
> Crack nature's moulds, all germens spill at once
> That make ingrateful man!
>
> (3.2.1–9)

Although in one sense Lear resigns himself to the powers of nature here, he is curiously insistent on controlling it. This becomes evident in his continuous use of imperatives: "blow," "crack," "rage," "blow," "spout," "singe," "strike," "crack," and "spill" are all commands for nature to act in ways that Lear wants. Relatively few scholars have come to the conclusion that Lear attempts to take agency here, and although Jones has noted that "Lear maintains his imaginary authority over the elements" (70), even he concludes that "the storm here is Lear's ally" (71), a stance that holds on to the notion that

Lear has some sort of power over the elements. I would rather argue that the king is exposed to and powerless in relation to the natural forces, and his defense mechanism is to create a feigned sense of agency, as if the wind blows because he wants it to blow. Lear is afraid. He once again talks of "sulphurous" things, last time applied to the female body (see above), here to lightning. His reaction to the storm is a panicked commotion in fear of, once again, the unknown.

Lear's panic is balanced by the fool, who is notably present in the storm scene. All of the fool's replies deal with practicality and going inside: "O, nuncle, court holy-water in a dry house is better than this rain-water out o'door" (3.2.10–11); "He that has a house to put's head in has a good headpiece [i.e. brain]" (3.2.25–26). The fool figures in the scene as a counterpoint to the king who has too hastily and radically decided to abandon all interior spaces. By letting go of his patriarchal space, Lear gives up man-made constructions altogether, not finding another suitable option. Without a space of rule, he goes to the other opposite, natural space, a space that lacks all human agency. Lear is uncomfortable with the idea of an inside space not ruled by him: "Return to her?" (2.2.396) he says to Goneril, who has asked him to return to Regan's house earlier in the play,

> And fifty men dismissed?
> No! Rather I abjure all roofs and choose
> To wage against the enmity o'th' air –
> To be a comrade with the wolf and owl –
> Necessity's sharp pinch! Return with her?
> (2.2.396–400)

Here, before he is exposed to the storm, Lear still believes he will "wage against" all weather. Yet, as we have seen, he imagines the storm as an ally, having realized that battling against nature is useless. By holding on to the notion that the storm is an ally, Lear maintains his delusion of patriarchal space. He imagines he is still within a space of human rule, having grown accustomed to power and agency over others in the confines of his court. While technically in nature, Lear is mentally within a patriarchal space, not understanding to abandon the mindset in order to survive the storm, not

realizing that the rules that apply within a human space do not apply in the open.

However, soon after the storm, Lear manages to show glimpses of empathy toward others. This happens when Lear explicitly notes that his "wits begin to turn," and he asks the Fool "[h]ow dost my boy? Art cold? / I am cold myself" (3.2.67–69). Furthermore, when Kent persuades the king and the Fool to enter a hovel, the king ruminates on people living without a shelter:

> Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
> That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
> How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
> Your looped and windowed raggedness, defend you
> From seasons such as these? O, I have ta'en
> Too little care of this.
>
> (3.4.28–33)

The storm has, after all, made an impact on Lear. What Lear needed was an immersion in the natural space in order to learn about empathy and human relations that are not based on power. In this scene, suddenly, Lear reflects on the wellbeing of others, the people who live outside with "houseless heads." It seems that the idea of houselessness has not come to him before, having lived comfortably within his own space, which is essentially a bubble. It is here, in the natural space, that Lear expands his horizons and feels humility for the first time.

Lear's humility is strengthened right after his speech on houseless heads when Edgar as Poor Tom emerges from the hovel. Edgar is the main subject of the following subchapter, so a few remarks shall suffice here. For Lear, Poor Tom functions as a mirror into his own future. Insistent on calling Poor Tom his "philosopher" (3.4.168; 3.4.172), Lear projects his own situation onto Poor Tom's abject condition: "Have his daughters brought him to this pass?" (3.4.63), Lear asks, and continues: "Nothing could have subdued nature / To such a lowness but his unkind daughters" (3.4.69–70). In Poor Tom, Lear sees a product of the natural environment, an instance of those with "houseless heads," and, in his demented state of mind, finds comfort in it. By sympathizing with such figures as Poor Tom and the Fool, Lear shows glimpses

of utter humility, albeit he still resides in his delusional bubble, not able to sympathize without projecting his own condition to those of others.

Thus, the hovel functions as a liminal space where Lear's patriarchal mindset is finally ready to shatter and thus take in influence from the outside world. Here, at last, he enters the actual natural space and understands his surroundings, most evident in his ability to sympathize.

Unlucky for Lear, his humility comes too late, and the play ends as tragedies do. Moreover, his last speech to the living Cordelia (see 3.2), shows the remains of his patriarchal delusions regarding spatial control. It is his ultimate vision of confinement: "Come, let's away to prison," he says,

> We two alone will sing like birds i'the cage.
> When thou dost ask me blessing I'll kneel down
> And ask of thee forgiveness. So we'll live
> And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh
> At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues
> Talk of court news; and we'll talk with them too –
> Who loses and who wins, who's in, who's out –
> And take upon's the mystery of things
> As if we were God's spies. And we'll wear out
> In a walled prison packs and sects of great ones
> That ebb and flow by the moon.
>
> (5.3.8–19)

Lear's speech is a dream of domesticity, of spending the rest of his life in seclusion with his daughter. Not only is there an image of the two of them living together as "birds i'the cage," but there is also an image of living for a long time "in a walled prison," where the word "walled" is a reinforcing prefix to "prison," which, by definition, has walls. It is a moving speech from a repentant father, yet it also manifests patriarchal confinement. It is an expression of love by Lear, but the only way he can show it is in an image of spatial control. The irony of his restrictive speech is strengthened by the fact that Cordelia, having been banished, has moved abroad as a wife to the King of France, thus forcing her to drastically distance herself from her father by moving to continental Europe.

The same structure where a patriarch takes spatial control over his offspring recurs in the subplot of *King Lear*. I now turn to discuss Gloucester

and how he deals with his two sons in the play. Both Edgar and Edmund play an important role here in terms of nature and space, Edmund being an excluded and hence distanced member of the family due to his illegitimacy, and Edgar being banished to the natural space *because of* Edmund who has been physically and mentally distanced from the family.

Edmund, indeed, is the main plotter and narrative force in *King Lear*'s subplot, and it is so because he is excluded from the family, as witnessed in the play's first scene. Gloucester has "so often blushed to acknowledge" the presence of Edmund, whose "breeding … hath been at [his] charge" (1.1.8–10). Edmund, while conceived outside marriage, is from an ecocentric perspective a natural son, which is something Gloucester disagrees with. For Gloucester, whose notion of nature is anthropocentric, Edmund is an unnatural son, conceived outside the norms of monogamous (human) conventions. Therefore, when Gloucester reports that "[Edmund] hath been out nine years, and away he shall again" (1.1.31–32), it is likely that the father has physically excluded Edmund from the family.[5]

Edmund's exclusion results in his plot to exclude the older brother, the "legitimate" Edgar, as a payback for how their father has treated the "illegitimate" son. By convincing Gloucester that Edgar is planning the death of their father, Edmund succeeds in his plans and his status raises in his father's eyes. Thus, Gloucester eventually acknowledges Edmund as a natural son:

> O strange and fastened villain,
> Would he deny his letter, said he? I never got him.
> Hark, the Duke's strumpets; I know not why he comes.
> All ports I'll bar, the villain shall not scape;
> The Duke must grant me that. Besides, his picture
> I will send far and near, that all the kingdom

---

[5] Foakes presents two explanations for Gloucester's words here: they either mean that Edmund as a nobleman has been trained in the household of some other aristocratic family, which was common at the time, or, indeed, that Gloucester has distanced Edmund from himself (159n). I am inclined to believe the latter explanation, because it gives at least a partial motive for Edmund's revenge.

> May have due note of him; and of my land,
> Loyal and natural boy, I'll work the means
> To make thee capable.
>
> (2.1.77–85)

This results in Edgar's escape and his finding refuge in the natural environment, a point I will return to below. What is noteworthy in the above passage, besides Gloucester naming Edmund a "natural boy," is how Gloucester takes arms to confine the whole kingdom lest Edgar should escape: "All ports I'll bar." Ports, according to Foakes, refer either to town gates, seaports, or both (221n). Whichever Gloucester specifically means, his line demonstrates spatial control. He is understandably afraid for his own life, yet the line is another example of metaphors of confinement. Most strongly his line resembles Leontes' lines in *The Winter's Tale*, when Polixenes and Camillo escape the city and Leontes closes all the gates to halt their escape (see 4.1). Gloucester's closing of the ports gains additional resonance if it is kept in mind how he has previously kept Edmund away from the family. Spatial restriction is a key element in patriarchal space, and Gloucester does not shy away from using it.

Gloucester's use of confinement resonates with the main plot of the play by contrasting his situation with that of Lear. Lear gives away his space and hence his power; Gloucester maintains his control over space. Only later, when blind, Gloucester loses this ability, and Edgar takes control over Gloucester's space by depicting an imaginary scene, a vision that Gloucester is willing to believe (see 4.2 for further discussion of this passage). Overall, both patriarchs eventually lose their "spatial worth" as Estok names it regarding Lear ("Home" 24), and both patriarchs emerge into the natural space.

The last scene in which Gloucester appears has strong symbolical resonance in terms of nature as a remedial space. Edgar, having himself escaped to "the happy hollow of a tree" (2.2.173) earlier in the play, says:

> Here, father, take the shadow of this tree
> For your good host. Pray that the right may thrive.
> If ever I return to you again,
> I'll bring you comfort.
>
> (5.2.1–4)

This moving passage gains additional meaning if we keep in mind Lear's "shadowy forests" (1.1.64) at the beginning of the play. Lear is wary and in awe of the dark and the unknown; here, Edgar brings Gloucester to a tree's shadow, a symbolical gesture of exposing the older generation to their fears. "Host" suggests an inside space, but here Edgar extends its meaning to the outside world, having himself found accommodation and refuge there, as if claiming that the natural space is as good a home as any court, as good as any man-made construction. Gloucester sitting in the tree's shadow is the play's culmination in its movement from patriarchal to natural space. It is therefore fitting to turn attention to the latter.

3.2 Natural Space

King Lear is famous for its depiction of the natural world as a ruthless and indifferent place for its human inhabitants, most famously encapsulated in the storm scene where the king rages at the mercy of the elements. Less attention, however, has been given to those characters of the play who manage to face the natural world in a more productive way. This is the premise for the current subchapter, where I examine Edgar and the way he builds a more co-agential relationship with nature in order to survive, and how, in the persona of Poor Tom, he is successful in terms of natural space as compared to King Lear who, accustomed to his patriarchal space, fails to adapt to the new environment. First, I analyze Edgar's disguise as a nonhuman element, then move on to his consciously illegible and repulsive language, and finally discuss the imagined natural space he conjures as a means to save his father. These three aspects, all linked to nature, are Edgar's responses to the pressure of spatial restriction caused by the patriarch figure of his family, Gloucester. Although I discussed Lear in the previous subchapter, it is necessary to consider him briefly here also, because of his initial function as an antipode to Poor Tom.

The theoretical basis for my co-agential reading of Edgar builds on Rebecca Laroche's and Jennifer Munroe's notion of "how (human) self/subject and (nonhuman) Other/object might be co-constructed such that what appears to be a discrete (human) individual is really an ontological composite of human and nonhuman agents" (27–28). By adapting to the role of a mad

human-animal composite that looks ridiculous to other human beings, Edgar flouts the traditional idea of man as a rational being and stands victorious at the end of the play. Knowingly or not, he sees through the spurious notion of human exceptionalism and is willing to be humiliated by other human beings who do not realize that none of the ridicule matters in the face of a natural catastrophe. Edgar blurs the lines of the human/nonhuman binary and stands as a surprisingly modern symbol for the human need to adapt a healthier relationship with the natural world. If we agree with Simon C. Estok, according to whom humans, not only in early modern England but also today around the world, suffer from "ecophobia" (*Ecocriticism and Shakespeare* 4), perhaps Poor Tom seems less mad in our eyes.

Equally important for this reading of Edgar is James R. Gibson's concept of environmental affordance. As Randall Martin paraphrases Gibson, "humans, like other animals, interact with their environments not as detached objects in 'empty' space (the classical view of Cartesian ontology and Newtonian physics) but relationally, as immersive physical mediums (e.g. air, water) and shifting perceived shapes and surfaces (plains, rocks, trees, mountains and living creatures)" (122). It is this interaction with the environment that Edgar adopts in the form of Poor Toom. He abolishes the delusional gap between men as detached objects from the surrounding nature.

Edgar plays a rather subdued role in the first third of the play, whereas his brother Edmund is a much more prominent character and one who delivers soliloquys. It is Edmund who dwells spaciously on the distinction between natural and unnatural as well as on people's delusional beliefs in astrology, all in the play's second scene. While Edmund keeps plotting, Edgar delivers nothing but one-line replies to his brother, less than ten lines in total.

Edgar's character does not become well-rounded until his transformation into Poor Tom. It is only then when he gives his first proper speech, which shows at least two major thematic dichotomies in terms of space and nature: man-as-hunter versus animal-as-hunted, and man-made constructions that confine ("port") versus nature-as-refuge ("happy hollow of a tree"):

> I heard myself proclaimed,
> And by the happy hollow of a tree

> Escaped the hunt. No port is free, no place
> That guard and most unusual vigilance
> Does not attend my taking. While I may scape
> I will preserve myself, and am bethought
> To take the basest and most poorest shape
> That ever penury in contempt of man
> Brought near to beast. My face I'll grime with filth,
> Blanket my loins, elf all my hair in knots
> And with presented nakedness outface
> The winds and persecutions of the sky. …
> Poor Turlygod, poor Tom,
> That's something yet: Edgar I nothing am.
>
> (2.2.172–192)

Edgar's first utilization of natural resources comes in the second line of the speech: he finds refuge in the hollow trunk of a tree, and thus he "escaped the hunt" of men, already comparing himself to a hunted animal. He realizes that spatial distancing from Gloucester is not possible, since "no port is free."

Gloucester has closed the gates, not unlike Leontes in *The Winter's Tale* who pursues Polixenes and Camillo, but the main difference between the two plays is that the kingdom in *King Lear* includes natural elements, unlike the cold court of Sicilia. Lear himself describes the kingdom that Regan is to inherit at the beginning of the play (quoted in 3.1) and Goneril's area is "no less in space, validity and pleasure" (1.1.81) than that of her sister. It is this lush environment, originally meant for Lear's daughters, which Edgar utilizes and forms a co-agential relationship with. He takes on the shape of a beast that men are contemptuous of in order to preserve himself. In his naked, dehumanized form he will "outface" the outdoors. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines this verb as "to face boldly or defiantly, to confront fearlessly or shamelessly; to brave, defy, stand up to" (OED *v* 2). Edgar stands up for survival, reminiscent of Edmund who "stand[s] up for bastards" (1.2.22), but unlike Lear who gives up in the face of natural forces. As an *amen* to his dissolution into the natural space, Edgar renounces his man-given name: "Edgar I nothing am."

To enhance his disguise as an unrecognizable nonhuman creature, Edgar in part adopts language that cannot be understood. As Foakes has noted, the above speech's "Turlygod" has no known explanation and most likely serves to obfuscate his human identity (238n). Thus, the manipulation of language is another means for Edgar to preserve himself. By adopting language that is indecipherable to human ears, Edgar distances himself from the identity of a human subject and turns into a kind of biological component of nature. It is fitting that "poor Turlygod" and "poor Tom" appear here, at the end of his speech: Edgar first explains his method of survival to the audience, and by the last two lines his transformation is complete.

Edgar's taking on of an inhuman shape makes an impression on Lear. It is Poor Tom who shows Lear a different approach to nature, even if a revolting one, at a pivotal moment in Lear's progress. Edgar's first appearance after his soliloquy happens when Lear show signs of humility: "O, I have ta'en / Too little care of this" (3.4.32–33). Here, Lear is for once vulnerable, and it is precisely here when Poor Tom emerges, first sounding from "within" as the stage direction claims (3.4.37). A couple of lines further on, Kent reveals where Poor Tom is hiding: "What art thou that dost grumble there i'the straw?" (3.4.43). Poor Tom himself describes his lodging: "Through the sharp hawthorn blows the cold wind" (3.4.45–46). This spatial detail suggests a contrast with Lear's previous lodging, the court, and it also shows a prospective future for Lear. Poor Tom's home of straws demonstrates to Lear the sort of a house that the fallen king himself might occupy soon. Indeed, Lear reflects on his own situation after seeing Poor Tom's abject condition: "Didst thou give all to thy two daughters?" (3.4.48). In this respect, Poor Tom becomes a mirror through which Lear can reflect on his own future outdoors, being, in a sense, a tool for Lear's own meditation.

Lear's mirroring of his own condition onto Poor Tom's is not merely hypothetical, but Lear shows willingness to *act* like Poor Tom, his "philosopher" (3.4.150). Although Lear pities Poor Tom – "thou wert better in a grave than to answer with thy uncovered body this extremity of the skies" (3.4.100) – he is suddenly ready to assimilate into similar conditions: "Off, off, you lendings: come, unbutton here" (3.4.106–107). In his hopeless situation, Lear wants to expose his body to the natural elements, much like Poor Tom.

He is disposed to change his attitude toward natural space in an extreme way, as extreme as the storm still rumbling on. He refuses to go "into the house" (3.4.152), hence avoiding indoors, just as Poor Tom does.

As R. A. Foakes has noted, Edgar intensifies his role as Poor Tom when his father appears in the same scene (281n). When Poor Tom claims to nourish himself with frogs, cow dung, and other repulsive things as part of his grotesque diet, he deliberately repulses humans. It is a necessary tactic for survival, a means to deceive the chaser. By theatrically exposing those in presence – most importantly Gloucester – to a listing of hideous natural components, Edgar plays on other characters' ecophobia: knowing that they would be disgusted by such a vivid depiction of nature (instead of idealized Nature), Edgar gains the upper hand and remains undiscovered behind the mask of Poor Tom.

Edgar continues to utilize this mask until deceiving Gloucester at the imagined hill. Edgar paints a detailed picture of the imagined space before his blind father: "Come on, sir," he says,

> here's the place. Stand still: how fearful
> And dizzy 'tis to cast one's eyes so low.
> The crows and choughs that wing the midway air
> Show scarce so gross as beetles. Half-way down
> Hangs one that gathers samphire, dreadful trade;
> Methinks he seems no bigger than his head.
> The fishermen that walk upon the beach
> Appear like mice, and yon tall anchoring barque
> Diminished to her cock, her cock a buoy
> Almost too small for sight. The murmuring surge
> That on th'unnumbered idle pebble chafes,
> Cannot be heard so high. I'll look no more,
> Lest my brain turn and the deficient sight
> Topple down headlong.
>
> (4.6.11–24)

Just as Edgar has theatrically assimilated himself into the natural space in order to survive, here he uses another trick of illusion to save his father. Edgar's imagined space is carefully constructed, beginning with a visualization: "how

fearful / And dizzy 'tis to cast one's eyes so low," he reports, and then plays with imagined distance: "The fishermen that walk upon the beach / Appear like mice." The spatial picture ends with an audial description of "The murmuring pebble / That on the th'unnumbered idle pebble chafes." Moreover, the view that Edgar is conveying here is plentiful in imagery of flora and fauna: "crows," "choughs," "beetles," and "samphire" all appear here, showcasing Edgar's knowledge of nature. He pays attention to nature's details, hence having the ability and vocabulary to conjure such a vivid vision of nature to his father.

What distinguishes this usage of nature from the previous actions of Poor Tom is that the aim is not his own survival but that of his father. Edgar has already succeeded in his assumed persona, and here he extends it further to save his father who, by using nature as a tool, has attempted to end his own life. From an ecosystemic perspective, Gloucester's aim is not according to nature's laws, even if we acknowledge, for example, the existence of animal suicide. Edgar stops his father's (in this light) "unnatural" act. Edgar's decision is most likely grounded on filial tenderness, not the ecosystem. Yet, by avoiding the use of nature for suicidal intentions, he shows another instance of living according to nature's laws, whether consciously or not. He paints an illusory natural space Gloucester wants to be in, only to make his father fall over to the actual ground, the real natural space that previously saved Edgar's life. Gloucester's tragicomic thump to the ground is Poor Tom's final lesson on following nature's rules. Poor Tom perceives nature as a remedial space, not a tool for self-destruction.

It is interesting to note that Edgar's imagined natural place is not unlike that of Lear in the division of his kingdom in the play's beginning. Both descriptions of space are referential to places that do not exist in the moment of the locution: in Lear's case, it is a romanticized vision of his kingdom, a vision of Nature recounted in a courtly setting; in Edgar's case, the scenery does not exist at all.

Hence, there is an interesting analogy between the two characters: both characters must face the harsh reality of nature, but deal with it in different ways: Lear projects his own condition onto Edgar's, and both create images of nature to their own ends. Lear's image of nature is romanticized, so

he fails; Edgar's image of nature (serious or not, depending on the extent to which he *plays* a role), formed outside the confines of the court, is more realistic, so he succeeds. Their relationship is somewhat akin to that of Leontes' and Autolycus' in *The Winter's Tale*: both characters are – at least physically – very far from each other, being almost dichotomous, but at the same time there are strong resonances between them.

As I have noted above, it is important to remember that Edgar's transformation is a theatrical act, a means in "desperate disguises" (Mentz, "Tongues" 157) to momentarily overcome nature before restoring the anthropocentric status quo. Similarly, Andreas Mahler has argued that "Edgar … having renewed himself in the enclave, returns a vigorous and strong young man, immediately recognized as the new 'Earl of Gloucester'" who outfaces the unnatural Edmund and peace is re-established (27). I agree with both Mentz and Mahler (though I would question Mahler's notion of enclaves, as noted in chapter 2) and hence do not argue that *King Lear* is a play about a modern, healthy, interdependent relationship with nature. However, thanks to Shakespeare's ambiguous characters, Edgar offers a viable approach to natural disasters, even if a temporary one motivated by eventual human victory. As Mentz puts it as regards early modern literature, Shakespeare "presents narratives that emphasize proto-ecological values" ("Tongues" 155). This proto-ecology becomes apparent via characters such as Edgar who are not part of the main plot, the plot that still conforms to traditionally more ecophobic viewpoints. In *King Lear*, ecophobia emerges most distinctly in the king himself to whom nature "represents an object space that must be controlled, without which it is a dangerous space of chaotic nothingness" (Estok, *Ecocriticism and Shakespeare* 26). By transforming this "object space" – the natural world – into a subject space and relying on what it yields, Edgar stands alive at the end of the play and delivers the last lines:

> The weight of this sad time we must obey,
> Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say.
> The oldest hath borne most; we that are young
> Shall never see so much, nor live so long.
>
> (5.3.322–325)

Edgar has experienced nature as such by forming a more co-agential relationship with it. He has seen in Lear's decline what a deluded notion of nature can do to a human being. Therefore, he knows how to speak truly and feelingly, beyond any artificial notions of what nature is. Even when acknowledged that Edgar's transformation is only temporary, his last lines support the fact that he has learned something and that he has developed as a character. From a banished, animalized creature (who learns to adopt to the natural space) to a father-saving victorious figure who knows to communicate true feelings, there is a sense of proper character arc in Edgar.

"Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say" most importantly refers to the play's main plot and the one other character in the play who has a co-agential relationship with nature: Cordelia. Unlike Edgar, Cordelia does not have a moment of transition on stage. Her affinity for natural, filial love is not a theatrical act. In terms of development as a character or a human being, she remains relatively stable (and, regrettably, absent) throughout most of the play.

Cordelia comes to represent something constant and real, something genuine and unaffected by the human lust for power. She works purely on nature's terms and, hence, speaks only of filial love to her father: "I love your majesty / According to my bond, no more nor less" (1.1.92–93). This "bond," as Foakes notes, may refer to the "bond of natural affection between child and parent" or even to a "shackle" (164n). The first interpretation stresses Cordelia's natural approach to love, and the second, interestingly, suggests spatial limiting. This may be one of the first hints of patriarchal confinement in the play, a fleeting metaphor that resonates with the play's ending, where Lear imagines the two of them sitting in a cage, a scene examined above.

What makes her speeches in the division of the kingdom interesting from an ecocritical perspective is her naturalistic diction: "Good my lord," she says, "You have begot me, bred me, loved me" (1.1.95–96). Both "begot" and "bred" evoke childrearing as something less than human and more animal-like, "begot" stressing sex as reproduction and "bred" used more often when speaking of animals. Cordelia bases her love on natural grounds without the "glib and oily art" she later says she does not possess (1.1.226). Furthermore, she draws attention to "such a tongue / That I am glad I have not" (1.1.233–

234), by which she contrasts the metaphorical usage of tongue (human flattery) with the muscular organ, siding with the latter: she does not have a tongue for *such* usage as flattery. This is the way Cordelia creates a distinction between the natural and the unnatural early in the play: she herself sets barriers in order to contradict those set by her father. Her drawing the line between herself and a male figure mirrors Perdita's refusal to grow artificial flowers in the garden in *The Winter's Tale*. Flattery and flowers are expectations set by the male sex in both plays, expectations that Cordelia and Perdita serve to subvert.

It is via Cordelia that Lear, the king who has ruled within the confines of his kingdom, first comes face to face with nature. Cordelia's language lacks the flattery Lear expects to hear. Hence, he is repulsed by the truthfulness of her account, and this is where Lear encounters something natural: non-romanticized filial love. This exposure to true naturalness leads him to encounter physical nature as it manifests in the following scenes, most visibly during the storm, as analyzed above. He misreads Cordelia's understanding of nature and this is the trigger to his downfall, the onset of the play's main tragedy. Cordelia perceives nature as such, while Lear perceives it as idealized Nature.

Coming back to Cordelia's absence in the play, her staying offstage for such a long period of time limits our understanding of her. Her asides in the play's beginning suggest that we will get exposure to her thoughts in the form of soliloquys, for example, but it never happens. Cordelia appears in rather ceremonial scenes, always accompanied by other people. Hence, what emerges as an interesting (and viable) way to analyze her character is to see in what terms other characters speak of her. By doing so, we gain at least one (even if not very reliable) way to examine her. At least from an ecofeminist perspective, this strategy is functional. Consider, for example, the vocabulary of a gentleman who reports of Cordelia's return to England, describing her facial features:

> You have seen
> Sunshine and rain at once, her smiles and tears
> Were like a better way. Those happy smilets
> That played on her ripe lip seemed not to know

> What guests were in her eyes, which parted thence
> As pearls from diamonds dropped.
>
> (4.3.16–22)

The gentleman's report is in stark contrast with the Cordelia of Act One. While the speech is poetically fine and beautiful, it paints a picture of an idealized woman whose outward features are likened to the natural world ("sunshine and rain") in an unrealistic manner. Furthermore, "her ripe lip" might carry a sexual connotation. The speech is crowned with her tears depicted "as pearls from diamonds dropped," an image far removed from all Cordelia has said in terms of naturalness at the play's onset. Its romantic hue, I would argue, is far removed from the overall atmosphere of the play, which is one possible reason for the whole scene's omission from the Folio version. By omitting the scene with its different tone, the bleak mood of the play remains intact.

When Cordelia appears again, she is the same Cordelia as in Act One, the kind of Cordelia who is practical and who is without the "glib and oily art" (1.1.226), as demonstrated by the following speech about her demented father. It shows a sensible approach to dealing with the natural forces:

> Was this a face
> To be opposed against the warring winds?
> To stand against the deep dread-bolted thunder,
> In the most terrible and nimble stroke
> Of quick cross-lightning? To watch, poor perdu,
> With this thin helm? Mine enemy's dog
> Though he had bit me should have stood that night
> Against my fire; and was thou fain, poor father,
> To hovel thee with swine and rogues forlorn
> In short and musty straw?
>
> (4.7.30–40)

Here, Cordelia remarks that human beings should cover themselves during storms like the one in Act Three. Unlike Lear, she knows what nature is capable of and knows how to preserve herself. She does not hold on to deluded views of man's survival in the face of storms, but knows that nature is merciless. Lear tests whether nature truly is merciless, because he does not know the answer yet. Cordelia's main concerns in this passage are the practical means of

survival, and she knows to retreat inside ("Against my fire [i.e. fireplace]").[6] She is aware of the hovel in which Lear has been, and knows that it is an inadequate shelter. In this sense, Cordelia differs from Edgar alias Poor Tom: she does not rely merely on nature's means, but utilizes human inventions and constructions, such as the fireplace. By retaining a practical approach to nature while still using human constructions, Cordelia inhabits a liminal space that is somewhere between nature and culture. She does not utilize nature as fiercely as Edgar does, but Edgar's transformation is only temporary and theatrical. Cordelia, on the other hand, comes to represent the golden means of nature versus culture: she is not man-centered like her father, nor completely willing to succumb to the natural space, like Poor Tom. She takes the middle ground.

As for the play's ending, the play being a tragedy, even the liminal space between man and nature is not enough for prosperity. The king's actions have gone too far and they cannot be undone. It is only later in Shakespeare, in late romances such as *The Winter's Tale*, where the natural space stands victorious at the end, or, at least, reaches a conciliatory balance with the patriarchal space. In *King Lear*, the patriarchal power is too strong to be overcome, too hard to be malleable, so Cordelia is hanged. All that is left is Edgar's last speech on naturalness, unheard by those who should have heard it (because most protagonists are dead). However, on a symbolical level, Edgar's lesson carries on to the later plays, and is, as it were, heeded by Leontes, the patriarch of *The Winter's Tale*, who is willing to accept outside influences within his gates.

To summarize, both Edgar and Cordelia function as contesting forces against the limitations set by patriarchal powers. Both do it by utilizing nature as it contrasts with the confining structures of inside spaces. In Edgar's performance, we can see thorough assimilation to and co-agential relationship with nature, as well as environmental affordance, the notion according to

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[6] Gloucester, speaking to Regan while tortured, uses a similar image regarding Lear: "If wolves had at thy gate howled that stern time, / Thou shouldst have said, 'Good porter, turn the key, / All cruels else subscribed'" (3.7.63–65). While the last phrase is obscure in its meaning, the overall message is presumably akin to Cordelia's sentiment: even wolves would be let in in such terrible weather.

which humans are not detached objects in nature but that humans and nature interact and shape each other. Cordelia, on the other hand, accentuates nature by representing a non-romanticized notion of nature and femininity. Her practical approach to nature contradicts her father's idealized visions of nature. By contributing these contesting elements to the story, I would argue that Edgar and Cordelia are proto-ecological figures in a narrative about patriarchal power. Shakespeare, whether knowingly or not, succeeded in creating such figures because of his usual way of writing ambiguous plays that are not overtly didactic. By avoiding a strong ideological bent, Shakespeare gives space to such figures as Edgar and Cordelia who even today are surprisingly modern and relevant.

3.3 Tragedy of Spaces

King Lear presents an interesting amalgamation of spaces. These different spaces, which I have defined above as relating to certain characters (Lear and Gloucester to patriarchal; Edgar and Cordelia to natural), are, of course, generalizations. As so often with Shakespeare, all the characters in *King Lear* are multifaceted. No character is fundamentally bad or good.

Despite this moral ambiguity, certain patterns of societal and ecocritical value have emerged: the older generation of patriarchs show symptoms of confining, of spatially restricting others; the younger generation of characters who, for varying reasons, have immersed themselves in nature, emerge as wise and liberated characters at the end. Edgar, who has been accustomed to the natural space physically, is one of the few characters alive at the play's end; Cordelia, who has been accustomed to the natural space emotionally, is a tragic figure whose death is mourned. Both characters have been persecuted by their fathers, who have used confinement and exclusion in different ways to further their goals as rulers. In all of these cases, confinement manifests in different spatial structures such as gates, cages, and ports, either metaphorically or physically.

In sum, I would argue, the tragedy of the play resides in the clash of these spaces, and how some characters fail to understand the spaces of others. In terms of the play, I have claimed the main spaces of conflict are patriarchal and natural, both in the abstract and physical sense. Eventually, what this conflict of spaces

comes down to is the all too human experience of not understanding others. *King Lear* is tragic in this sense, as the king fails to sympathize properly with others, at best managing to show minimal empathy by projecting his own poor condition onto others. *The Winter's Tale*, however, presents a different ending. Belonging to the tradition of romances more than any other genre, it shows the possibility of understanding the spaces of others, of opening the domain of patriarchy, and letting in the influence of the natural environment. I now turn to examine how, specifically, these different spaces function in *The Winter's Tale*.

4 Gates and Latches: *The Winter's Tale*

The Winter's Tale stands as an enticing object of spatial enquiry because of its explicit bifurcation of spaces: Sicilia versus Bohemia, which, on a symbolical level, could correspond to dichotomies such as cold versus warm, closed versus open, unnatural versus natural. However, the purpose of my analysis is to examine spatial matters beyond such simple distinctions in order to bring forth awareness of the societal and ecological aspects of space in the play. My aim is to discuss patriarchal and natural spaces, and, specifically, how different characters of the play act in and react to these spaces. While Leontes, Polixenes, the shepherd, and, to some extent, Florizel, are associated with patriarchal space and its distinct features (such as confinement and/or idealization of women, and containment of nature), Perdita and Autolycus contest and subvert the barriers imposed upon them and live in a more harmonious relationship with the natural space.

By discussing patriarchal and natural spaces as heterogeneous and overlapping elements in the play (to a larger extent than in *King Lear*), it is useful to turn to Henri Lefebvre's theory of the "ambiguous continuity" of social spaces, congruent with Laroche and Munroe's notion of the delusion of containment in interior versus exterior spaces (see 3.2). "Visible boundaries," Lefebvre notes,

> such as walls or enclosures in general, give rise for their part to an appearance of separation between spaces where in fact what exists is an ambiguous continuity. The space of a room, bedroom, house or garden may be cut off in a sense from social space by barriers and walls, by all the signs of private property, yet still remain fundamentally part of that space.
>
> (87)

I would argue that *The Winter's Tale* manifests this ambiguous continuity of spaces, namely patriarchal spaces, which range from the physically opaque walls of Sicilia to the more abstract confinement present in the shepherd's hut and garden in Bohemia, the space that is more seemingly natural yet is symptomatic of similar fantasies of spatial restriction as those occurring in Sicilia. Lear manifests a similar continuity to a lesser extent – he roams the

natural space in a *delusion* of patriarchal space even after he has lost it – while *The Winter's Tale* extends patriarchal confinement beyond its physical structures. I will return to Lefebvre's notion of ambiguous continuity in my analysis.

4.1 Patriarchal Space

Let me begin with the play's older generation, primarily Leontes, Polixenes, and the shepherd, who show the strongest inclination to confine, exclude, and control both nature and women in *The Winter's Tale*. While I allocate the next subchapter to the younger generation and the natural space they inhabit, Florizel is examined also under patriarchal space, as his actions share similarities with those of his father and uncle.

Confinement, which characterizes much of patriarchal space, is introduced early in the play within the court of Sicilia when Hermione playfully asks Polixenes to prolong his stay. "Force me to keep you as a prisoner, / Not like a guest" (1.2.52–53) she implores, and proceeds to give him two choices: "My prisoner? Or my guest?" (1.2.55). When Polixenes agrees to extend his visit as a guest, Hermione says: "Not your gaoler then, / But your kind hostess" (1.2.59–60). These early references to imprisonment serve to ground an important aspect of the court as a patriarchal space: Leontes, just as the other patriarch later on, aims to spatially limit other characters, with imprisonment as the ultimate form of spatial restriction. Hermione's playful words turn against herself, and the imagery of imprisonment gains much darker shades, after Leontes recounts the moment when the couple were married and he proclaimed his ownership of her: "Then didst thou utter, / 'I am yours for ever'" (1.2.104–105). By this point, Leontes is already jealous and speaks of their matrimony just to remind Hermione whom she belongs to.

Imprisonment becomes real for Hermione and the newly delivered baby in the second act: "My poor prisoner, / I am innocent as you," Emilia has heard Hermione say to her baby once she has been confined (2.2.27–28). Paulina, moved by these words, takes it upon her to save the baby. "You need not fear it," she says to the gaoler,

> This child was prisoner to the womb, and is
> By law and process of Great Nature thence

> Freed and enfranchised, not a party to
> The anger of the king, nor guilty of –
> If any be – the trespass of the queen.
>
> (2.2.56–62)

Paulina argues that while Leontes has subjugated Hermione, the child is freed from an allegorical prison by natural order. This is the play's first suggestion of proper natural space: the child has natural rights beyond any orders imposed by men or humans in general.

The casting off, or containment, of the female element functions as an alternative to confinement in patriarchal space. Leontes decides to send off both Paulina and the baby: "Out! / A mankind witch! / Hence with her, out o' door" (2.3.65–66); "Will you not push her out?" (2.3.72). Here, Leontes is in "a nest of traitors" (2.3.80), where even Antigonus is "woman-tired, unroosted" (2.3.73) to Paulina who is his "crone" (2.3.75), all derogatory references to birds and fowl. Paulina's argumentation does not convince Leontes, whose only solution is to remove her from his male space: "Out of the chamber with her!" (2.3.120); "Away with her!" (2.3.122). He asks Antigonus to bear the child

> To some remote and desert place, quite out
> Of our dominions; and that there thou leave it,
> Without more mercy, to it own protection
> And favour of the climate.
>
> (2.3.174–177)

By asking Antigonus to carry out the favor, Leontes performs an act of exclusion, of casting off, as confinement has turned out to be insufficient in resolving the problem of threatened male authority. However, the climate "quite out / Of our dominions," turns out to be more favorable and protective than Leontes imagines. For him, the outside natural space is the lawless unknown that will eventually devour the child. This view of the outside climate contrasts with the report that Dion and Cleomenes bring back to court after their journey to the temple of Apollo: "The climate's delicate, the air most sweet, / Fertile the isle, the temple much surpassing / The common praise it bears" (3.1.1–3).

Leontes disregards this knowledge brought from outside his court, and solely believes in the logic of the rational mind in accordance with Cartesian ideas of human uniqueness (Thomas 33), most likely due to delusions induced by power. “Thy intention,” meaning his own mental capabilities (Pitcher 40) in his nearly incomprehensible soliloquy,

> stabs the centre,
> Thou dost make possible things not so held,
> Communicat’st with dreams – how can this be? –
> With what’s unreal thou coactive art,
> And fellow’st nothing.
>
> (1.2.138–142)

His mind makes “possible things not so held,” things beyond sensory experience, and hence the message of Hermione’s fidelity falls on deaf ears. The patriarch relies on the powers of his mind, even if he seems deranged. As the play is a romance and not a tragedy, Leontes learns something by the time of the family’s reconciliation in the final act, but not through his own actions or experiences. It is his daughter Perdita, grown and parented far beyond the walls of Sicilia, who introduces a more interdependent idea of culture and nature, as she returns to the place of her origin. She can see “the very permeability of the boundaries between domestic concerns and wild frontiers” (Laroche and Munroe 40). By Leontes’ repentance, the patriarchal space is finally ripe for change.

Leontes associates the outdoors with unpredictability, with something he is unable to control. Leontes’ possessive madness increases at the play’s first reference to outdoors, a space often associated with unknowability. “We are yours i’th’ garden,” Hermione says when she goes there for a walk with Polixenes, and invites her husband, too (1.1.177). Gardens, according to Amy L. Tigner, are “loaded with sexual innuendo” in earlier literature (medieval romances), and hence sometimes considered erotic spaces (116). Leontes refuses Hermione’s offer and instead begins scheming against her in a sudden profusion of animal imagery: “I am angling now, / Though you perceive me not how I give line” (1.2.179–180), likening Hermione to a catchable fish, a metaphor continued later in the same speech: “his pond fished by his next neighbour” (1.2.194). Leontes’ pond is his patriarchal space, Hermione a fish

that swims there, and Polixenes his once trustworthy neighbor who now pursues Leontes' property. It is noteworthy that the images of Hermione as an animal emerge here in the first instance of the outside world, out in the open, "beneath the sky" (1.2.179). It reminds Leontes that his wife is physically farther away from the space dominated by him, King of Sicilia. Outside is a world beyond his power, and his wife is moving toward that natural lawlessness, a space, where man's dominion is tenuous.

Leontes' pejorative association of women with nature is the result of his flawed view of nature. In Hermione's absence, as she is in the garden, Leontes' imagination runs wild with associations of her with different animals, not only fish. Hermione, according to him, "holds up the neb, the bill to [Polixenes]", a reference to birds' beaks. He also associates her with horses: "My wife's a hobby-horse, deserves a name / As rank as any flax-wench" (1.2.274–275). A hobby-horse meant a "common whore, female ridden for pleasure" (Pitcher 173). Hermione and Polixenes, according to Leontes, are "horsing foot on foot" (1.2.285), another image associating the female with horses and sexuality. An interesting image combining horses and confinement appears in Leontes' interplay with Antigonus who defends Hermione against Leontes' accusations: "If it prove / She's otherwise [i.e. adulterous], I'll keep my stables where / I lodge my wife" (2.1.134–135). Although Antigonus' purpose here is to support Hermione, he holds the opinion that an adulterous woman is like an animal that should be kept in a stable, to be controlled in the male space. "I'll geld 'em all," he says of women (2.1.147), referring to the castration of horses.

What is essential to remember about Leontes and his descent into madness is that he does not leave his court until the last scene of the play. He rages, abuses, and schemes within the walls of his court, believing only the figments of his imagination and not what happens outside. He does not comprehend nature because he does not have a proper relationship with it. He imagines the whole planet and the natural elements against him: "Physic for't there's none," he argues,

> It is a bawdy planet, that will strike
> Where 'tis predominant; and 'tis powerful, think it,
> From east, west, north and south; be it concluded,

> No barricado for a belly. Know't,
> It will let in and out the enemy
> With bag and baggage.
>
> (1.2.199–205)

He finds some comfort in the knowledge that "other men have gates [too], and those gates [have been] opened, / As mine, against their will" (1.2.196-197). Barricados and gates come to represent both physical and metaphorical confinement of the female as well as the exclusion of the natural world. Leontes' gates, as those of other men, have "let in and out the enemy." The walls have been breached by outside influence, which endangers the patriarchal equilibrium. As Laroche and Munroe argue, a "household itself is a marker for the illusion (and delusion) of containment – of space, of bodies, of gendered identity, of nonhuman creatures and non-living things" (19). Leontes fails to acknowledge the outside as an equally essential part of life. He fears the outside and reigns in his idealized inside space, a space of delusional containment.

Posterns are recurring images that gain metaphoric resonance with sexuality and power. *Oxford English Dictionary* defines it as "a back or side entrance; any door, gate, etc., distinct from the main entrance, *esp*. one which is private or unobtrusive" (OED *postern* n). When Camillo helps Polixenes escape the city, it takes place through these "private" back entrances, symbolically connected to sexuality and to how Leontes has been presumably cuckolded without his knowledge: "Your followers I will whisper to the business, / And will by twos and threes at several posterns / Clear them o'th' city" (1.2.433–435). Further on: "It is mine authority to command / The keys of all the posterns," says Camillo (1.2.459–460). Most importantly, it appears in Leontes' speech after Polixenes has successfully escaped. "How came the posterns / So easily open?" (2.1.52–53), he asks at the end of a long speech dealing with Hermione's adultery (which, in turn, involves another animalistic image, that of a spider in a cup). Thus, the posterns here refer not only to the physical escape of Polixenes but also to the metaphorical gates of Hermione and the sex she has allegedly had with Polixenes. The supposedly adulterous wife has to him a "without-door form" (2.1.69). In the scene where Hermione is accused and sentenced, she has been "hurried / Here, to this

place, i'th' open air" (3.2.102–103), presumably meaning not that the scene occurs outside but that she has been brought "here in court" (3.2.9) by being publicly shamed, like "a strumpet" (3.2.100), when carried there from the outside.

The natural space beyond Sicilia's walls is early on implied to be a place of refuge. When Camillo and Polixenes have been seen "behind the tuft of pines," as a Lord reports to Leontes (2.1.34), Pitcher notes that this is "an oddly specific location" (189) by Shakespeare. Still, two aspects are worth noticing here. First, Shakespeare seemed to like the image, as he had used it already in *Richard II* in a similar context: "There stands the castle, by yon tuft of trees" (2.3.53). Second, and more importantly, the specific image of trees points to the fact that Polixenes and Camillo are escaping from Leontes' patriarchal court to the natural space. It is a sign of things to come, of going to nature, a theme that is developed in the fourth act. As a matter of fact, Camillo and Polixenes are running toward the sea, a location that Brayton calls "a space lying beyond the reach of human knowledge and control" (178) and "the wildest kind of landscape" (182). The sea is indeed incomprehensible and untrustworthy to Leontes, hence his usage of the simile "false … as waters" earlier in the play (1.2.131–132).

A common misconception regarding the two main locations of *The Winter's Tale* seems to be the simplified distinction between a cold, closed, patriarchal Sicilia and a warm, open, pastoral Bohemia. To some extent this is true: the most vehement and tragic drama of the play occurs in Leontes' court, and it contrasts sharply with the elements of comedy and the jolly songs of nature sung in Bohemia. However, my claim is that there is no such clear distinction between the two places in terms of patriarchal rule: even in Bohemia, it is men who set boundaries, domesticate, prey, and gaze upon women. In fact, Bohemia is the men's celebration of an idealized Nature where Perdita unwillingly plays her part. Pitcher goes as far as to argue that most of the action in the fourth act happens indoors under male dominion (259). The scenes in Bohemia have surprisingly little to do with the natural world. A more realistic picture of Bohemian flora and fauna is shown before the fourth act in the famous storm scene where the infant Perdita is left to the mercy of actual, uninhabited nature, and her carrier, Antigonus, is eaten alive by a bear. In this

rare instance of wildlife, Shakespeare touches upon the kind of nature where most of the action of *King Lear* occurs: undomesticated, uninhabited, nonhuman nature where humans need to adapt as Edgar as Poor Tom does in his "desperate disguises" (Mentz 157), lest they face the fate of Lear. Perdita, who has seen actual nature as she had been abandoned there, is the only character in the sheep-shearing festival capable of distinguishing between nature and Nature.

Polixenes' dealings with his son Florizel in Bohemia largely reflect the same delusions of possession and containment that Leontes has regarding his family in Sicilia. Polixenes is concerned about Florizel's recent "removedness" (4.2.36) from his space, which Camillo has noted too: "he is of late much retired from court" (4.2.31–32). This scene begins a new dichotomy of spaces, one of which deals with a difference of class. Polixenes is a king whose son now "is seldom [away] from the house of a most homely shepherd" (4.2.37–38). There, Shakespeare presents a different spatial problem from that of Sicilia: after we have seen how one king associates outdoors with lawlessness, uncertainty, and infidelity, here another king, purblind of having presumably always lived in a courtly setting, fears the influence that a lower-class setting, a shepherd's house, might have on his son and only heir. The outside space possesses a different fear for Polixenes than for Leontes, but both nonetheless demonstrate a fear of going beyond the boundaries of their respective patriarchal spaces. Going beyond Leontes' and Polixenes' spaces – spaces that are safe in their eyes but enclosures in their offspring's eyes – triggers the main conflicts of the play. Hermione offends her master which leads to the casting away of Perdita; following her to Bohemia, Florizel offends his master which then leads to his and Perdita's escape to Sicilia. Spatial wandering, which ends in a reconciliation in one locus, is a key element in *The Winter's Tale* as in his other late romances. It is caused by a subversion in patriarchal space which leads to its momentary collapse: outside influences from the natural space get in, as breaths of fresh air, and then the patriarchal center returns. As the gates close, something new has been learned.

The gates in Polixenes' case materialize when Florizel is about to wed Perdita. When Polixenes removes his disguise to prohibit the wedding, he

disowns Florizel: "we'll [royal we] bar thee from succession" (4.4.434). Addressing Perdita, he continues:

> if ever henceforth thou
> These rural latches to his entrance open,
> Or hoop his body more with thy embraces,
> I will devise a death as cruel for thee
> As thou art tender to't.
>
> (4.4.442–446)

Polixenes' "rural latches" and "entrance" are analogous to Hermione's "portends" and "gates," images of penetrable gates detrimental to patriarchal space. Polixenes is quite literally worried about his son being exposed to outdoor environment by Perdita's "rural latches."

By ignoring what is real and by worshipping an idea of nature, Leontes and Polixenes have lost their respective connection to nature. This is a connection they once had, as is evident at the beginning of the play where their childhood together is depicted by images of trees: "They were trained together in their childhoods, and there *rooted* betwixt them then such an affection which cannot choose but *branch* now" (1.1.22–24, emphasis added). Similarly, Polixenes narrates how they "were as twinned *lambs* that did frisk i'th' *sun* / And *bleat* the one at th'other" (1.2.67–68, emphasis added). Both patriarchs have lost this connection at one point or another, and, as rulers, speak of nature in a rather derogatory manner.

While for the most part Florizel plays the role of a persecuted man in love, even his view of the relation between men and women takes on features similar to those of his father and Leontes. He, too, sees women as part of an idealized Nature where men are in control. "I bless the time / When my good falcon made her flight across / Thy father's ground" (4.4.14–16), he says to Perdita, having first seen her, a woman, on a hunting trip. He, too, associates Perdita with birds, as Leontes did with his wife in Sicilia. Florizel does not speak directly of confronting her, but does so via imagery of hunting and the mentions of her step-father's ground. As Egan has observed regarding *The Winter's Tale*, ground, as in actual earth, associates strongly with femaleness, while men are associated with the countries in which they reign, thus dominating the earth in them (126). However, as Florizel's words above

demonstrate, this country–earth relation extends to any men with property in the play, such as the shepherd with his cottage, not only kings with their countries.

It is Florizel and the shepherd who come to set mental barriers around Perdita in Bohemia. Here we come across another metaphor of boundaries, analogous to Leontes' posterns in Sicilia: domestication. The sheep-shearing festival is about to begin in Bohemia: "Apprehend / Nothing but jollity," Florizel says to her,

> The gods themselves,
> Humbling their deities to love, have taken
> The shapes of beasts upon them. Jupiter
> Became a bull and bellowed; the green Neptune
> A ram and bleated;
>
> (4.4.24–29)

Florizel is afraid Perdita will not be merry at the feast, thus he tells her that even the gods played animals. Perdita is still wary because of the danger in the two of them being seen together. "With these forced thoughts I prithee darken not / The mirth o'th' feast" (4.4.41–42), he replies, true to his wish that she plays the role of a merry animal in an attempt to match her emotional state with his.

Further on, Florizel evokes an idealized picture of an unmoving Perdita, a spatially limited dancing figure: "When you do dance, I wish you / A wave o'th' sea, that you might ever do / Nothing but that, move still, still so, / And own no other function" (4.4.140–143). He sees her as a Petrarchan woman who is only admired and looked upon, analogous to the disguised Camillo's comments on Perdita a moment before: "I should leave grazing were I of your flock, / And only live by gazing" (4.4.109–110). Interestingly, the shepherd abandoned his sheep when he came across the abandoned Perdita and the money left next to her in the wilderness.

The strongest domestic expectations at the feast are set by the shepherd who, in reflecting on his late wife, asks his step-daughter to entertain the new guests, the disguised Polixenes and Camillo, in a confining manner:

> Fie, daughter, when my old wife lived, upon
> This day she was both pantler, butler, cook;

> Both dame and servant, welcomed all, served all,
> Would sing her song and dance her turn, now here
> At upper end o'th' table, now i'th' middle;
> On his shoulder and his, her face o'fire
> With labour, and the thing she took to quench it
> She would to each one sip. You are retired
> As if you were a feasted one and not
> The hostess of the meeting.
>
> (4.4.55–64)

The shepherd pictures a domesticated woman servant, whose purpose is to please the male guests by singing and dancing as well as to prepare and serve food and drinks ("pantler, butler, cook"). The shepherd imposes these expectations on his step-daughter who is to fill the vacancy left by the deceased housewife. Perdita is barred within the limits of a household, and her escape with Florizel over the sea to Sicilia also symbolizes her disconnection and release from one male space, the shepherd's cottage. It is in line with Camillo's and Polixenes' early escape to Bohemia where the sea provides the means to freedom. It is tempting to argue that Shakespeare put an imaginary sea between Sicilia and Bohemia simply as an image of transitioning to something new, the sea cleansing previous cultural or man-made attachments before new and hopefully better ones are formed ashore.

From Sicilia's court to the shepherd's cottage, from concrete walls of containment to a spatial metaphor in which a woman is implored not to move, *The Winter's Tale* presents different levels of patriarchal influence that all deal with spatial limiting and deluded notions of nature. It is therefore erroneous to assert that patriarchal power is restricted to courtly settings only but, as I have claimed in light of Levebvre's "ambiguous continuity" of social spaces, its influence can be seen to spread beyond the city gates to the more rural areas of Shakespeare's story world, areas such as Bohemia, which in Shakespeare criticism have been considered pastoral idylls. However, the actual natural space – that does emerge momentarily in the play – helps to overthrow the oppressing power, and it is these aspects of nature that I turn to next.

4.2 Natural Space

So far, we have seen how some of the male characters in *The Winter's Tale* impose patriarchal barriers around other characters: in the case of Sicilia, for example, it occurs explicitly via physical gates, while the shepherd's domestic expectations at the cottage represent metaphorical confinement. This section's aim is to examine the ways the confined characters, mainly Perdita and Autolycus, start to question and subvert the men in power: how they, each in their own distinct way, breach the barriers and, eventually, set their own.

Perdita sets her emotional boundaries by showing reluctance at having to act merrily at the sheep-shearing festival: her unwillingness comes to the fore in her replies to Florizel, who attempts to cheer her spirits: "To me the difference forges dread" (4.4.17), she remarks to him as regards their class difference. The most vivid instance of reluctance emerges when she is hesitant to serve according to the shepherd's ideals. As she welcomes the disguised Polixenes, she clearly puts on a role: "Sir, welcome. / It is my father's will I should take on me / The hostess-ship o'th' day" (4.4.70–72). The *Oxford English Dictionary* marks this as the only instance of the word "Hostesseship" (OED *hostess* derivatives), implying that Perdita comes up with an unusual word the moment she is implored to do something that does not come to her naturally. By using such a clumsy neologism, she acknowledges that the festival sets upon her tasks that idealize and therefore misrepresent both natural and feminine space.

Perdita defies the festival that subordinates her to the role of a flower girl, because her idea of natural space is different from others attending the festival, characters who in more festive spirits take part in the celebrations of idealized Nature. This becomes apparent in the dialogue between Polixenes and Perdita regarding flowers and grafting, a scene that ecocritics have scrutinized exhaustively. As Polixenes deems that the flowers – "rosemary and rue" (4.4.74) – given to him and Camillo by Perdita are flowers of winter and hence fittingly reflect the recipients' old age, Perdita remarks:

> Sir, the year growing ancient,
> Not yet on summer's death, nor on the birth
> Of trembling winter, the fairest flowers o'th' season

> Are our carnations and streaked gillyvors,
> Which some call Nature's bastards; of that kind
> Our rustic garden's barren, and I care not
> To get slips of them.
>
> (4.4.79–85)

She responds only indirectly to what Polixenes has said, indicating that she gave them rosemary and rue not as symbols of Polixenes' or Camillo's age. Rosemary and rue are not the most beautiful flowers of the season, unlike "carnations and streaked gillyvors," but she does not grow such flowers in the garden because of their artificiality due to grafting. Instead of growing and distributing artificially produced beauty, Perdita gives flowers that are not only naturally beautiful but also useful herbs. Rosemary and rue may be modest outwardly but beneficial when consumed by humans. Additionally, she gives marjoram to the two men (4.4.104), an herb that also Edgar suggests to mad Lear (*King Lear* 4.6.93). Marjoram was believed to be a remedy "against cold diseases of the braine and head" (John Gerard, quoted in Foakes 334), so there is also the possibility of Perdita ridiculing the two men.

Perdita's approach to the natural world lacks artificiality. In her actions, not unlike Edgar, she demonstrates a more co-agential relationship with nature, a relationship where humans benefit from nature but not necessarily for visual or aesthetic reasons. It is to be assumed, then, that although Perdita has been parented within the limits of one kind of a patriarchal space, she has nonetheless developed a different kind of relationship with the surrounding natural space. As far as the text reveals, she is among the only characters of the play who has grown up in a meek, natural environment.[7] Although the shepherd's cottage exhibits elements of a patriarchal enclosure, apparently, her parenting has been less confined in terms of concrete spatiality: having such deep knowledge of flowers, she must

[7] Other characters who presumably have grown up in a similar environment include the old shepherd, the clown, Mopsa, Dorca, and perhaps Autolycus who is discussed below. Otherwise the cast is connected to one court or another, either by serving in one or by belonging there by birth.

have learned a lot about the natural environment around the cottage in order to provide for the family.

Throughout the scene, Perdita repudiates the view of nature as Nature, as something idealized and merely gazed upon. Perdita replies to Polixenes' long-winding argument for the benefits of grafting with a laconic "So it is" (4.4.98), which Gabriel Egan also has noticed (129). It is easy to read too much into such short utterances – how does she say it, positively or negatively? – but, considering Perdita's other strong statements in the scene, there are signs that she is frustrated with the situation and with Polixenes. "I care not to get slips of them," as quoted above, shows Perdita's defensive stance, as does her response to Polixenes' final attempt at making her grow grafted flowers in the garden:

> I'll not put
> The dibble in earth to set one slip of them;
> No more than, were I painted, I would wish
> This youth should say 'twere well, and only therefore
> Desire to breed by me.
>
> (4.4.99–130)

Here, Perdita connects the discussion of art versus nature to women and makeup: grafting-as-artificial to makeup-as-artificial: it is as if she would want to be "painted," so that Florizel would want to have sex with her. Her idea of the natural space is more reminiscent of the real nature as depicted before the start of the fourth act during the storm: nature can be dangerous, too, and one should not just play with it as an object of beauty. For her, nature is a necessary part of human life, and not primarily so for aesthetic but practical reasons: as her stepfather is a shepherd, she has learned to utilize nature by living day-to-day life at the farm. Therefore, idealized Nature is unnatural nature to her.

Hence, the cottage comes to represent something between a civilized, humanized court – such as Leontes' Sicilia or Polixenes' Bohemia – and the natural, nonhuman space, such as the kind of nature witnessed in the storm scene. In this way, the cottage is where the play is at its closest to demonstrating a place where an interdependent relationship with nature can exist: it has its humanized side but it also utilizes, and does not steer away

from, nature. Unlike the Sicilian court, where Leontes raves owing to his distorted view of nature, and the Bohemian court, into which Polixenes is reluctant to admit anything rural, the cottage is a place where natural influences are acknowledged to be an inevitable part of life.

Perdita's rejection of the spurious notion of nature extends to the issue between her and the king's son's class difference. She talks of the different classes in spatial terms: "The selfsame sun that shines upon his court / Hides not his visage from our cottage, but / Looks on alike" (4.4.449–451). She does not submit to the idea that the court is somehow different in worth compared to the cottage: the same sun shines on both in the very same way. She opposes the idea that a man-made construction could possess inherent authority in the face of natural forces, forces that far surpass the potentiality of any buildings.[8] Simultaneously, Perdita challenges the power that walls of enclosure can have on human beings in the grand scheme of things by comparing man-made constructions (the court and the cottage) to one of the strongest elemental forces affecting the Earth (the sun). She has presumably lived much more under the sun, having even been abandoned beneath the sky as an infant, and does not acknowledge the superiority of confines.

While Perdita's metaphor of sunrays is gentle, Florizel also evokes a grand picture of the Earth, yet much more violent: "Let Nature crush the sides o'th' earth together, / And mar the seeds within" (4.4.483–485). It shows Florizel's frustration within the enclave of his home and the expectations directed to a king's son: in order to breach those walls, he conjures an image of a power beyond man's reach. His speech resembles that of Lear in the storm:

> And thou, all-shaking thunder,
> Strike flat the thick rotundity of the world,
> Crack nature's moulds, all germens spill at once
> That make ingrateful man!
>
> (*King Lear* 3.2.6–9)

[8] Shakespeare seems to have liked this image, as it echoes a similar spatial metaphor in *All's Well That Ends Well* when Bertram proclaims his unwillingness to marry Helena due to her lower social status. In reply to Bertram, the King says: "From lowest place when virtuous things proceed, / The place is dignified by th' doer's deed" (2.3.121–122).

The difference between the two men is, however, that they evoke nature's powers for opposite purposes. Lear is desperate in his new habitat in the natural space and he complains about the destruction of his patriarchal enclave; Florizel wishes for the exact destruction of that enclave.

Florizel, too, finds solace in water. When the gates lower around him and Perdita, there is spatial panic: "Have you thought on / A place whereto you'll go?" Camillo asks Florizel (4.4.541–542), who replies that together with Perdita he will "profess / Ourselves to be the slaves of chance, and flies / Of every wind that blows" (4.4.544–546), implying an escape via the sea. Camillo recognizes the dangers of the open sea, having himself faced them before, and convinces him that going to Sicilia is better than facing "unpathed waters, undreamed shores" (4.4.572). Nonetheless, it is a sea voyage that is to save them: hence "to th' seaside" (4.4.672), a scenario parallel to the escape of Polixenes and Camillo years before.

Often overlooked by ecocritics, despite some exceptions such as Charlotte Scott, is Autolycus' role in the play. Scott problematizes the pastoral idyll of Bohemia by alluding to prevalent consumerism in the subplot involving Autolycus, and her argumentation is persuasive and necessary in order to change the common misconception of Bohemia as a mere idyll to a more heterogeneous notion. However, Scott's argument is limited to Autolycus' role in terms of money and consumerism: while Autolycus indeed plays the comical role of a cunning highway robber, his function is not limited to that. His songs are full of naturalistic imagery with spatial substance: "I have served Prince Florizel, and in my time wore three-pile, but now I am out of service," he says, and begins to sing:

> But shall I go mourn for that, my dear?
> The pale moon shines by night
> And when I wander here and there
> I then do most right.
>
> (4.3.13–18)

Autolycus is an outcast, not unlike the romantic heroine and hero of the play. He adds another level of exclusion to the story, although by way of a different genre. Having previously served Florizel in the court, he has successfully adapted to a new situation outside the walls. Not mourning what

he has lost, he wanders in the night and therefore "do[es] most right," which is more natural. Unlike Perdita the outcast who evokes the sun, Autolycus the outcast conjures its symbolic counterpart, "The pale moon," implying a different stance toward their novel situation outdoors. Both have assimilated to the natural space but via different paths.

Autolycus has been "whipped out of the court," as the recurring phrase reveals (4.3.88; 4.3.90), and, in this state, comes to defy the court. Although it is not told whether he knows of the preceding events in Sicilia, Autolycus' jokes echo the actions of Leontes: "Here's another ballad," he tells,

> of a fish that appeared upon the coast on Wednesday the fourscore of April, forty thousand fathom above water, and sung this ballad against the hard hearts of maids. It was thought she was a woman and was turned into a cold fish for she would not exchange flesh with one that loved her. The ballad is very pitiful, and as true.
>
> (4.4.275–281)

The "pitiful" and "true" mock-ballad recalls Leontes' likening of Hermione to a fish, a metaphor which was discussed above. The fish did not "exchange flesh with one that loved her," in other words Hermione did not have sex with Leontes but with Polixenes, and thereby was "turned into a cold fish."

Autolycus disparages the court when wearing Florizel's clothes: "Seest thou not the air of the court in these enfoldings? Hath no my gait in it the measure of the court? Received not thy nose court-odour from me?" (4.4.735–737). He jokes with the notion that the court has a distinct or at least worthier "air" or "odour." Playing the same role, he imitates a courtly person in contempt of Perdita and Florizel's marriage, interestingly in spatial terms: "Draw our throne into a sheepcote?" (4.4.783–784)

In fact, Autolycus does not believe in confines set by humans and he ridicules all set boundaries. It is Autolycus who ends the long sheep-shearing scene, and once again there is a departure to the sea: "Walk before toward the seaside" (4.4.829–830), he says to the shepherd and the clown. Autolycus brings this departure from a patriarchal enclave one step further by urinating on the hedge, as Pitcher argues (310): "I will but look upon the hedge, and

follow you" (4.4.830–831). The hedge represents the walls of Polixenes, another man-made attempt at creating an enclave of power in natural space: Autolycus acknowledges the hedge's futility, and flees with the others to Sicilia. Thus, Perdita, Autolycus, and, to a lesser extent, Florizel, serve to question and challenge the residing powers. One way or another, they all share the faith of having been confined or cast out under the command of a patriarchal figure who operates with delusional ideas of nature.

I now turn to the play's ending where, as is appropriate for a romance, all the hardships are overcome and spatial division vanishes as Sicilia is willing to receive influences from natural space.

3.3 Coalescence of Spaces

When Leontes' court has witnessed a series of appalling deeds committed by the patriarch, it becomes a site ever more associated with infertility. Coldness and winter reign in Sicilia, as the play's title suggests, and only Perdita's return to the court makes a change. Before learning of her return, Leontes bemoans his actions "That heirless … hath made my kingdom" (5.1.10), an heirless kingdom being congruent with infertile ground. True to his nature, Leontes does not use such metaphors as regards his kingdom, but considers his poor situation only in terms of not having populated his kingdom with sons. Ending up heirless is, of course, a reasonable worry for a king, but it is also unsurprising that the starting point of Leontes' misery is "The wrong I did myself" (5.1.9), in other words what he did to his kingdom, for his patriarchal space. That space is about to collapse, although it is interrupted by the miraculous events in the play's finale.

Whereas Leontes is still portrayed in terms of his kingdom and court, Perdita's emergence is described by imagery of nature, more specifically by images of earth. The gentleman depicts her as "the most peerless piece of earth" (5.1.94). The word recurs in Leontes' speech, "Welcome hither, / As is the spring to th'earth!" (5.1.151), when he is relieved to the extent that he compares the newcomers, Perdita and Florizel, to spring. It also implies that he sees something fresh, hopeful, and fertile in them, as if their previous location, Bohemia, and its nature, would be visible in the young couple. This is further explored in Leontes' next longer speech:

> The blessed gods
> Purge all infection from our air whilst you
> Do climate here. You have a holy father,
> A graceful gentleman, against whose person,
> So sacred as it is, I have done sin,
> For which the heavens, taking angry note,
> Have left me issueless.
>
> (5.1.167–173)

Besides the fact that he once again considers his sorrow in terms of his lack of an heir, the speech is striking because of the way the influence of Bohemia now permeates Sicilia: by "climating" in Sicilia, the young couple "purge[s] all infection" from the court's "air." Past deeds infecting the place are on the move in order to be replaced with something new. This is also evocative of Autolycus who plays with the notion that a court has a distinct air, as discussed earlier. Viewing air as a purifying element, it is interesting to consider Florizel's line on how they reached Sicilia: they were brought there by "a prosperous south-wind friendly" (5.1.160). Gwilym Jones notes that in early modern England each cardinal direction was associated with one of the four elements, the south being associated with air (82). Florizel's line, providing the wind's direction, gains additional resonance by this knowledge.

Before the court sees this new air, it is interesting to note how nature is depicted in metaphors of danger and monstrosity. Paulina, reflecting on Apollo's paradoxical message (that Leontes will not have an heir before his lost child is found), notes that the message is "monstrous to human reason" (5.1.41). This connects an irresolvable puzzle to nature's unkindest creatures, thereby emphasizing a binary between *human* reason and *nature's* monsters. The inconceivable equals nature, not unlike Dion's speech on the risks of Sicilia not having an heir:

> consider little
> What dangers, by his highness' fail of issue,
> May drop upon his kingdom and devour
> Incertain lookers-on.
>
> (5.1.26–29)

As Pitcher has glossed it (313), the image is of a bird of prey looking down and attacking unsuspecting victims. It is a metaphor of the outside world, the natural space that is somehow linked to Leontes' lack of an heir, a problem that originates from *inside* the city gates. This metaphor is another example of how natural space is often viewed within Sicilia's walls: it is a place of unpredictable dangers. Outdoors is an unknown that can be blamed for problems that were created indoors.

The most significant developments in Sicilia occur not in Leontes' court but at Paulina's house in the play's final scene. This is crucial, because it is the first and only time in the play that the location is a female space, a physical building under a woman's rule. Paulina herself calls the place humbly "my poor house" (5.3.6), a place which, as Leontes notes, has a "gallery" with "many singularities" (5.3.10–12), which suggests that Paulina has a strong connection to art. This change of location has been overlooked by most critics of *The Winter's Tale*, including Munroe who is otherwise persuasive in noting how the power relation changes here from masculine to feminine, as Leontes subjects himself to Paulina's power (154). But even in her analysis, it is left unexplained *how* or *why* this change occurs, and the possibility that the change of location plays a part in it is left unexplored. Similarly, when Catherine Belsey argues that Paulina is perhaps the only woman in later Renaissance drama to effectively drive the king toward good actions (197), she does not investigate how Paulina manages to do so.

The scene also marks the first steps that Leontes takes outside his court. The place is a "removed house" (5.2.104–105), hence not close by, which suggests that Leontes must take steps outside, and that it is not simply another room in the court. By leaving his patriarchal space and exposing himself to outside influences, both natural and feminine, the play turns to its finale, where Leontes' notions of nature are tested one last time. The last scene marks a moment when his patriarchal integrity is fractured to the extent that he is willing to take in new influences, to expand his masculine mind (a mind supposedly capable of knowing everything without outside influence, one that "make[s] possible things not so held" [1.2.139]), by adding influences of the feminine space and natural space. Quite literally, at the play's end, Leontes is exposed to the feminine space, Paulina's house (and not his love's house, but

an old widow's non-sexual space), and to the natural space during his walk outside.

Before going to Paulina's house, he still romanticizes Hermione. In Petrarchan fashion, he idealizes Hermione's eyes: "Stars, stars; / And all eyes else, dead coals!" (5.1.67–68). The metaphor both objectifies Hermione as a sight of wonder and undercuts every other woman's eyes as "burnt-out cinders," as Pitcher notes (316), thus the metaphor has hues of human lust. Moreover, there is another metaphor that links women to nature. It is only after seeing the statue that Leontes is willing to accept the natural senescence of female beauty: "But yet, Paulina, / Hermione was not so much wrinkled, nothing / So aged as this seems" (5.3.27–29). Leontes does not once glorify this change in Hermione, but rather accepts it. The question of Petrarchan idolization comes to its peak when the statue is revealed and Leontes must ask himself what is natural and what is artificial. A statue made of stone is congruent with the ultimate worshipping of inanimate objects of female beauty, sculpted to be gazed at.[9] Leontes accepts the statue's naturalness, its "wrinkles," and thereby, at that moment, changes his stance on what beauty is.

Much has been written about the play's ending and how it reinstates traditional values by Leontes resuming his agency. Munroe, however, argues that the "play does not end unambiguously with a restoration of traditional patriarchal values; Leontes's poor husbandry ultimately stands corrected, and in so doing, the play demonstrates his reorientation to both the natural world and to female characters" (153). While I would be happy if I could agree with Munroe and hold on to an optimistic mindset, it is also true that everything at the play's end happens under Paulina's roof, a feminine space that is only a temporary location to reawaken Hermione. "Let's from this place" (5.3.146), commands Leontes in his last speech, having asked Paulina to marry according to his consent. Leontes, having reconciled with his family, already shows signs of reinstating the patriarchal status quo by taking the reins even before they

[9] Interestingly, Hermione's statue is sculpted by Giulio Romano, "an Italian artist associated with Rome, papal politics, and pornography" (Pitcher 46). Romano had painted vivid portrayals of sexual positions, which underlines how sexualized Hermione seems here.

have left Paulina's place (which manifests the ambiguous continuity of Leontes' patriarchal space). Although Leontes does give Paulina some agency – "Good Paulina, / Lead us from hence" (5.3.151–152) – I think it is something of an exaggeration to consider Leontes a changed man after he returns to his patriarchal space: as we have seen, different spaces *do* affect characters in *The Winter's Tale*. In Lefebvrian fashion, roles are assumed and power relations are formed in different spaces. Therefore, unlike Munroe, I think it is suggested that patriarchal values will be restored. Details or definitive answers are not given and the play ends ambiguously, only to Shakespeare's merit.

When considering all these different elements of spatiality in *The Winter's Tale*, my conclusion is this: any sort of clear-cut dichotomies of space are bound to be insufficient. If spatial variety is limited to a simple distinction between the cold (closed) court of Sicilia and the fertile (open) nature of Bohemia, we inevitably ignore the fact the most of the play's alleged nature scenes occur within a cultivated, humanized space, such as the sheep-shearing festival. If you take Bohemia to represent a space where Perdita manages to prosper as a free woman, you overlook how she, too, has grown in one kind of patriarchal space, where she is expected to act in certain ways. Hence, it is not necessarily the play's geographical dichotomy (that of two main locations) that makes it a fruitful object of spatial inquiry: what seems to be more relevant is the heterogeneity present in both locations. Both Sicilia and Bohemia, in fact, deal with similar, interlinked issues, one of which is the difference between indoors and outdoors. These interior and exterior spaces, which roughly but not strictly correspond to patriarchal and natural spaces, function in similar ways in both main locations with deep societal and ecological implications. By connecting an analysis of dramatic space to what Habermann and Witen define as "social/gendered space" (6), I have endeavored to bring attention to the societal and ecological qualities of space in the play, rather than discussing spatiality only in terms of the play's geographical bifurcation. In fact, examining space from ecocritical and feminist points of view can, hopefully, enrich our understanding not only of *The Winter's Tale* but also of our everyday life: we might now reflect on whether Leontes' initial derogatory conception of nature and women differs crucially from the ones that have caused some of our current social problems.

5 Conclusion

The spatial turn in the humanities has allowed a proliferation of new perspectives on literature. With the present thesis, I hope to have made a case for one of its many niches, that of eco-spatial Shakespeare. By examining in detail the explicit and the implied spaces in *King Lear* and *The Winter's Tale*, I have hopefully elucidated the heterogeneity of these spaces: while I make a general distinction between patriarchal and natural spaces, the plays refuse to abide by simple dichotomies. There are many possible ways to divide spaces in the two plays, but I have deliberately chosen a division that would entail social and environmental analysis. By contrasting the patriarchal spaces of Lear and Leontes with the natural space outside their walls, *King Lear* and *The Winter's Tale* become auspicious objects of study: how do these patriarchs, living in the containment of their socially-produced spaces, cope in and with natural space, the sole space that is not generated by humans? And how do the characters oppressed by the patriarchs cope in and with nature?

Things do not fare well for Lear, to be sure. His preference for patriarchal space renders him unfit for natural space. Demented and afraid, he maintains an illusion of patriarchal reign even in the storm by assuming to be in control of the natural elements. Having lived within the walls of his kingdom alone, presumably for a long time, both nature and women have become an unknown to him, which results in his ecophobic and misogynistic approach to them. However, once in nature, he encounters some of his fears, and eventually shows at least minimal empathy toward the gruesomely nature-masked Edgar. Yet, his emotional epiphany comes too late, and, ultimately, his dream of a cage to be shared with Cordelia at the end of the play is an implication of his resolute will to confine.

Similar patterns recur in the subplot of *King Lear*, when Gloucester deliberately controls the spaces of his sons, having first distanced himself from the illegitimate son Edmund (although nature does not, obviously, divide children into legitimate and illegitimate). This leads to the persecution of Edgar, a hunt for which Gloucester bars all the ports of the kingdom lest he should escape. Edgar, however, assimilates himself into the natural space and, although it is only temporary, learns to live in a co-operative way with nature.

Moreover, Edgar takes control over his blinded father's space by conveying a completely fabricated scene of Dover cliffs, a space that his father believes he is in. Similar to Edgar and Gloucester's relationship, Cordelia subverts socially produced spaces by refusing to flatter Lear and, instead, speaks of their relationship in more naturalistic terms: for instance, love that is filial, not power-related.

King Lear is a tragedy and the differing spaces of patriarchy and nature are never properly reconciled or combined. However, *The Winter's Tale* provides a different and perhaps more hopeful vision of the relationship between the two spaces. From the onset, the play implies a tragedy by depicting the delusional Leontes, bewildered by the natural space and extremely prone to jealousy. Just like Lear, Leontes is unaware of the outside world, a space that he cannot control. Thereby, he associates the garden Hermione and Polixenes walk in as a sexual space, and derogatorily equates women with nature. He continuously refers to gates, either those of Sicilia that must be shut to prevent the escape of Polixenes, or the metaphorical gates of Hermione, which stand for her sexual fidelity.

Hermione's sexual gates have their counterpoint in Perdita's "rural latches" which Polixenes forbids Florizel from opening. Polixenes' remark shows that patriarchal space manifests itself even in more seemingly natural spaces. The extent to which Bohemia is a natural space is contestable, and I have argued that it contains several of the qualities of patriarchal space: Perdita is essentially limited to acting according to the will of males in the sheep-shearing festival, and her step-father maintains strong domestic expectations of her in his household. Even Florizel shows elements of confinement in his romanticized speeches to Perdita, although to a lesser extent. However, in general, this diffusion of patriarchal space into the natural environment demonstrates what Lefebvre calls an ambiguous continuity of social spaces, the notion of social impact (power) that extends over physical boundaries. This spatial limiting is contested by Perdita and Autolycus. The former refuses to act in the manner wished by some of the male characters (most crucially so in the scene when she refuses to grow artificial flowers just for beauty's sake), and the latter makes fun of power structures, which

culminates in the scene where he urinates on the hedge, a symbol of defying boundaries.

The ending of *The Winter's Tale* presents an ambiguous and critically contested scene, in which Leontes' patriarchal space is willing to admit natural influences. As I have argued, an important detail to note is the location of the final scene: rare for Shakespeare, it occurs inside a female space. Leontes has first subjected himself to the natural space in the emergence of Perdita and Florizel, and, finally, he also subjects himself to a female space, which suggests a change in Leontes' mindset. However, the play does not tell what happens once they exit the female space and re-enter Leontes' patriarchal domain, thus leaving the ending ultimately open.

A similar eco-spatial angle, I think, can potentially illuminate other works in Shakespeare's oeuvre. In some respects, this thesis only tests the waters by asking what happens when you combine Lefebvrian theory of social space, ecocriticism, and two plays by the arguably most famous playwright of all time. This thesis contrasts a tragedy with a romance, yet how do patriarchal and natural spaces manifest and interact in the histories and comedies? What about the Roman plays? Is there any kind of chronological development visible in Shakespeare's dealing with these two spaces, if an early play such as *Titus Andronicus* gets contrasted with, for instance, *Coriolanus*? What about *King Lear* in contrast to *Titus Andronicus* and *Timon of Athens*, all plays sharing patriarchal overlords and immersions into natural space?

I would argue that these are all worthwhile questions to ask, particularly today because they help to illuminate how humans deal with nature. As we face climate change and other natural disasters in an age now being called the Anthropocene, it is important to ask whether there is a link between the safety of our socially coded spaces (which in these two plays manifests in the extreme notion of patriarchal space) and the way we are willing to exploit nature. Why are we not quite as co-agential with nature as Poor Tom, and should we be? How unknown and "other" (and thereby frightening) is nature to us as it is to Lear or Leontes? I would maintain that the presentist outlook on literary analysis helps us to understand that even the practice of hard science, such as ecology, is an act carried out by humans, and therefore inherently has a human element. By understanding how these

human elements contribute to Shakespeare's patriarchal and natural spaces, we can perhaps develop strategies leading to a healthier, more co-agential relationship with nature. Moreover, being aware of patriarchal spaces may improve the life that we live in the spaces of home and work, spaces that are not as safe as they could be, especially for women.

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